THE HISTORICAL LIFE OF CHRIST

By the Same Author

JESUS: SEVEN QUESTIONS
THE NEW EVANGEL
WHAT IS THE BIBLE?
PROBLEMS OF IMMANENCE,
etc.

THE HISTORICAL LIFE OF CHRIST

By

J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., D.Phil.

With a Preface by

F. C. BURKITT, D.D., F.B.A.

Λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες,
οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας.

—MARK xii. 10.

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ALBERTO SCHWEITZER,

SAPIENTI ARCHITECTO,
QVI FVNDAMENTVM POSVIT:
ALIVS AVTEM SVPERÆDIFICAVIT.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Of all forms of literary production, a new Life of Christ seems eminently in need of a justification of its existence.

Unless a writer can plead that he is treating his theme from a novel viewpoint, that he has aimed at a new interpretation, or brought some important and neglected factor into its proper focus, he has no right to encroach upon another inch of ground already so encumbered.

Let it therefore be said at once that while the present volume is " modernist " in its attitude, it is not merely another " liberal " Life of Christ. Such Lives have been written in plenty, and it was not necessary, nor desirable, to do yet once more what has been done over and over again by a whole galaxy of liberal scholars.

The book before the reader claims to be a Historical Life of Christ precisely because it claims to find its principle of interpretation in a historical element in the Gospels which until recently has been habitually ignored, or had its significance minimized, by traditionalist and liberal alike: insomuch that in the reconstruction here presented this hitherto rejected stone has become the headstone of the corner.

Were a critic to call the result an *Eschatological* Life of Christ, the author would not demur to such a description, simply adding, " Eschatological, and *therefore* Historical."

If, as Schweitzer tells us, " the ideal Life of Jesus of the close of the nineteenth century is the Life which H. J. Holtzmann did not write, but which can be pieced together from his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels and his New Testament Theology," it is equally true that the ideal Life of Christ of the beginning of the twentieth century is that which Schweitzer should have written, but contented himself with vividly suggesting in his epoch-marking *Quest of the Historical Jesus.*

That he did not undertake this task himself must be the lasting regret of every New Testament student; that neither he nor anyone else has carried out a piece of work which clamoured to be done is the author's sole excuse for a volume which seeks for

the first time to apply Schweitzer's thesis to the whole Gospel story.

It is hoped that this will be accepted as a sufficiently explicit acknowledgment of an indebtedness which the author could not disguise if he would, and would not if he could.

He has further to express his warmest thanks to Professor F. C. Burkitt, of Cambridge, not only for the luminous Preface with which that great scholar has enriched these pages, but for numerous criticisms, suggestions, and corrections which have made the book less imperfect than it otherwise would have been. It has been an immense privilege to be in contact with so judicial a mind, and to be able to draw on such stores of learning ; and while Professor Burkitt rightly disclaims any responsibility for the contents of this LIFE OF CHRIST, or the opinions expressed in it, the author owes a very great deal to his kindly interest and wise counsel.

In conclusion, the reader is asked to believe that this attempt at re-interpretation and reconstruction has been made in a spirit of profound humility and reverence, and with a wholly constructive aim. When we turn in faith and worship to Him in Whom we have seen God manifest in the flesh, even the Power of God unto salvation, we are content to feel that modernism is nothing, and traditionalism is nothing, but that in Him, through Whom we have our access in one Spirit unto the Father, every " middle wall of partition " is done away.

May He Who is our peace dwell in our hearts in such wise that we may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so be filled unto all the fullness of God.

PREFACE

THIS HISTORICAL LIFE OF CHRIST was written by Dr. Warschauer before he asked me to write a Preface for it. When he asked me, I said I could not do so without reading it first, and in the course of doing so I made various criticisms and suggestions to the author, some of which he accepted, while others he did not agree to. In any case the book remains Dr. Warschauer's own, not mine, and in commending it to the reading public I think the best service I can do is to explain the feelings with which I regard his courageous enterprise.

To make a Portrait of Christ, each man for himself, is the duty of every Christian, of whatever school of thought and practice. It cannot really be done second-hand, by others, if the Figure is to have any vital force or compelling influence. "Christ" is neither a set of moral maxims, nor an elixir of life, but first and foremost a certain person who lived in Palestine when Tiberius was Emperor, a thousand years and more before the Battle of Hastings. He is not a personification of our best impulses and our purest aspirations, but an individual historical character. He lived in Galilee and Judæa among His countrymen the Jews, He had a definite career, He was put to death because of what He said and did, and the sum total of what He said and did and suffered made such a strange and unique impression upon His followers that the Religion of which His worship is the centre became the creed of the civilized world.

"Christ our Pattern," "Follow Me"—these are two well-worn Christian phrases. But how can Christ be our Pattern, how can we endeavour ourselves to follow Him unless we know the Pattern that He set and the Way He led? And to keep up the metaphors for a moment, a Pattern is not a mere design, but an exemplar wrought in such-and-such materials, and the Way, in one sense at least, is not Christ Himself but the environment in which He lived on earth. He lived among Pharisees and scribes, Samaritans and Galileans: who and what are they? What do they mean to us nowadays? Of one thing at least I feel sure, that unless Jesus means a great deal to us in His relations with scribes and Galileans and "publicans" and "chief priests," He will not

really mean very much to us in our own lives. However catholic or orthodox we may consider ourselves to be we shall have little right to call our hasty mental sketch of Him by the name of Jesus, or to identify our moral efforts with His authentic call.

But my reader may say, "What has this to do with a new LIFE OF CHRIST? The old Gospels are enough for me." This indeed is a very good answer from the industrious student of the Four Gospels, but I fear that in most cases it is not the student that makes it. There is no evidence that the Gospels are more studied than they used to be. They are studied differently, but on the whole they are studied less. They never were really easy documents to understand properly, as those have found in all ages who have attempted to put their teachings into practice, and now that they have been studied with modern scientific method their difficulties are more apparent than ever. I do not mean that they are of inferior value: on the contrary, it is remarkable that a document so near to the original actors in the great Drama as the Gospel of Mark should have been preserved at all. But the Gospel of Mark to an attentive reader abounds in historical problems, and the same is true of each of the others.

The existence of these problems is veiled to many people by the superficial familiarity that we all have with the wording of the Gospels. This is not a matter of seventeenth-century English or of inaccurate renderings. We all know the tales so well, in a sort of a way, that we have forgotten to ask "Why?" Why was Jesus baptized? Why did He tell His disciples not to resist evil and to take no care for the morrow? What is the meaning of "The Kingdom of God has drawn nigh"? Why did Jesus go up to Jerusalem expecting death, and why, when He arrived there, did He disturb the arrangements of the Temple Courts? Why did Judas "betray" his Master? Why did the crowd support Jesus and then not raise a voice for Him in His hour of peril? These questions are neither orthodox nor unorthodox: they arise directly, I venture to think, from the attentive reading of the Gospels, but too often we take the course of the tale for granted and forget that, if we had never heard the story, we should feel we needed to give some answers to these and similar questions before we felt that we understood its main outlines.

And those who feel themselves to be Modernists, of whatever brand, have a special reason to occupy themselves in these matters. Dr. Warschauer is writing as a Modernist, one of those who take it as an axiom that modern investigation and discovery has revolutionized our ideas about external nature and the course of ancient

history. We must all acknowledge that these investigations and discoveries have revealed to us much that was unknown to the most wise and prudent of nineteen hundred years ago. We have been gradually forced to recognize that our universe is governed by inexorable natural law, and what we know of the earlier history of this planet and of the men who live upon it puts the recorded traditions of Greeks and Hebrews equally into the region of fairy tales. But the Gospels were written by men who had no conception of impersonal physical law. To them the early chapters of Genesis were matter-of-fact history, and diseases and evil thoughts were to them equally the work of invisible demons that infested the air like the malarial mosquito. Moreover they, or at any rate the believers for whom they wrote, believed that a great catastrophe was at hand. God, or His Vice-regent, was soon—very soon—to descend from heaven and to hold a great Assize upon the living and the dead, in which final justice would be done and all wrongs righted. This was not merely a Christian belief: it was the belief of the majority of the Jews, and it was under the influence of this and what went with it that the Jewish nation rebelled against the Romans and perished as a political entity. That happened only a generation after the crucifixion of Jesus, and the preliminary mutterings of the disastrous eruption can be heard in every paragraph of the Gospels.

All this, as it seems to me, is what the modern educated reader feels, at least at the back of his mind, when he sits down to read again the Gospels whose phrases he has been more or less familiar with all his life. With this strange and sinister illumination, what will the Central Figure look like? Has the Crucifix still any meaning for us? And, if we hastily turn away and say "very little," the historian cannot escape the further question, How did this apparently insignificant episode become the starting-point of so great and persistent a development? It is not enough for the Modernist to reject the Catholic view: if his view is to supplant the Catholic view, it must be because it is more adequate, because it is more nearly in harmony with all the facts, the facts not only of the "Life of Christ," but also of the enthusiasm and persistence of the Christians.

And here, as it seems to me, comes in the value of Dr. Warschauer's actual achievement. He has been doing what indeed has often been done before, as readers of Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* know, and what he has done will have to be done again and again. But it is a task which can scarcely be undertaken too often. Here the reader may see in full detail

what impression the Gospel narratives have made on one who has studied them long and diligently from a modern point of view. This and that detail of the familiar story will be found to have been cleared up and satisfactorily explained. In other cases the reader will doubtless shake his head and say, " Surely this is inadequate " : very well, it should set him to think what better explanation he himself can give. That indeed is one of the chief services that LIVES OF CHRIST can render. From the nature of the case they can bring in no fresh information, or very little. But they can draw attention to problems inherent in the tradition, they can suggest answers, they can provoke further reflexion. And when the view or theory that underlies any LIFE OF CHRIST has been set forth, it has also in the end to undergo the same kind of ordeal as that to which it has subjected the traditional Gospels : does it account for the survival and the long-continued progress of Christianity itself ?

On any theory the rise of Christianity is a wonderful and extraordinary development. The Sower went forth to sow, and what grew and bore fruit has become a world-wide Harvest. That which Christians regard as the career of the Divine essence incorporated in a single human being is a strange tale, or would be so to us if we had not heard about it so often. I read once—I forget where, but it was on a bookstall and I think in French—a tale of how the Son of God, victorious over death, was ascending through the regions of heaven to His glorious Father, and, as He passed along, one of the highest Angels ventured to accost Him and to say, " My Lord, the great Design, the inauguration of Thy Kingdom on the earth, is it all finished ? " And Jesus said, " It is finished ! " The Angel said, " My Lord, I have been sent elsewhere, I have heard nothing : dare I ask what Thou hast done ? " Jesus replied, " I was known as the child of respectable working folk, I lived unnoticed for some thirty years, then I came forward for a few months and talked with men and women of all sorts, and I think some of those who listened will be influenced all their lives, some fishermen, some petty tradesmen, some women good and bad. And in the end enemies had Me executed." " My Lord, my Lord," exclaimed the Angel in horror, " what, was there no other way ? " " No," said Jesus, " *there was no other way.*"

Cambridge, 1926.

F. C. BURKITT.

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INTRODUCTION

I

In the early hours of Friday, April 7th, A.D. 30—so it has been calculated with a fair show of probability—a small procession, of a kind too common in those days to attract much attention, left the Antonia barracks in Jerusalem for a destination outside the city wall, near a main road, and situated on an elevation sufficiently high to be conspicuous (Mark xv. 22, 29, 40 ; Matt xxvii. 31, 33, 39 ; Luke xxiii. 33, 49). Halting there, the party proceeded to its business, the execution of three malefactors, one of whom had, still earlier in the day, been found guilty of carrying on a propaganda for the overthrow of the Roman Government in Judæa and the re-establishment of the Jewish monarchy, with himself as king. That this supposed claim to kingship was on the face of it absurd—for there was nothing in the prisoner's manner or appearance to support it—did not render it any the less an act of high treason ; moreover, he came from Galilee, well known as the home of turbulent spirits and insurrectionary movements. It was the business of the authorities to quench such an agitation as soon as it manifested itself, and not to wait till it assumed dangerous proportions.

Jerusalem was *en fête*, crowded with visitors, preoccupied with the impending Passover ; and probably few people knew anything at all of certain events which had succeeded each other rapidly within the last twenty-four hours or so, and were now about to reach their culmination—the act of an informer, a semi-secret arrest, a hurried trial and death sentence. Everything proceeded swiftly and precisely to the appointed issue, and by the afternoon the alleged pretender to the throne was dead.

Yet this commonplace event, this everyday tragedy, which we may presume to have passed off practically unobserved, was destined to mark a point of unexampled importance in the history of the world. Within a generation of the date which we have named a vigorous movement was spreading far and wide within the Roman Empire, its symbol the very instrument of the death of shame which the Roman authorities had inflicted

that day upon an obscure Jewish teacher, a person as unintelligible to Cæsar's representative as was the whole Jewish nation. In province after province, in city after city, not excepting Rome itself, communities were springing up which proclaimed that the one who had suffered this degrading punishment, reserved for slaves and criminals of the worst kind, was none other than the Son of God, who, being Himself in the form of God, had emptied Himself of His Divine attributes, and humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross.

Then began a protracted struggle between this movement and the secular power, in which the latter—instinctively aware that it was fighting for life—tried again and again to crush its opponent, only to be beaten back step by step, and ultimately defeated; and if the outward recognition, the official status, gained by the Christian Church were not achieved without much loss of its erstwhile purity, the dominion of Jesus Christ over unnumbered millions of human hearts has yet been the most significant and the most blessed fact throughout all the centuries that have flowed past since His brief appearance on earth.

What do we know of this historical Personage, to whom from the first such passionate devotion has gone forth, and to whom men turn in this as in every age as the Revealer and the Revelation of God?

If we were inclined to speak paradoxically, we might answer, "Everything—and next to nothing."

Everything, for His Mind and Character have stamped themselves ineffaceably upon the consciousness of the race; and next to nothing, if we seek to write His "Life" as the "Lives" of other historical personages are written, telling a connected story from the cradle to the grave. The moment such an enterprise were contemplated, we should be compelled to subscribe to the commonplace that "the materials for a 'Life of Christ' are non-existent." If we nevertheless adhere to this title for the historical sketch which follows, we do so because the qualified sense in which alone it can be used is generally understood. The four short treatises known as the Gospels are so far from being biographies that they have been, not altogether unjustly, described as "records of the Passion extended backwards." That is to say, they supply us with a fairly full account of the last days of our Lord; with a mass of incidents and sayings belonging to the period of His public activity, variously combined by the various writers; but with only one or two hints of what events preceded His emergence from the obscurity of private life at the age of about

thirty (Luke iii. 23), while His origin, birth, and infancy are lost in legend. More than any other character in history, Jesus Christ comes before us " as unknown, and yet well known " (2 Cor. vi. 9).

It will be the business of the historical student who sets out upon the task of examining the material—at once scanty and disjointed—which he finds at his disposal, to discriminate between more and less trustworthy witnesses and traditions ; to inquire whether he can trace some general course of development in the events to be set forth ; and to arrange the fragments of fact in their most probable sequence, and—where possible—their causal connection.

In discharging so difficult a task he will often have to content himself with something far short of certainty, weighing probability against rival probability and surmise against counter-surmise. He will be the less tempted to claim finality for his judgments, because the condition of the sources, the frequently varying accounts of events and the order in which they happened, preclude such finality. Conducting his investigation in the consciousness of these difficulties, he cannot hope to satisfy those who desire a statement free from any element of uncertainty. His purpose being, in Ranke's memorable phrase, " simply to say what really happened "—*i.e.* so far as that is possible—he will not approach his witnesses as supernaturally exempt from error, but apply to their evidence the standards which govern all historical research, selecting and rejecting, and arriving often at no more than provisional conclusions.

We shall deem it unnecessary to deal with those aberrations of criticism which would seek to reduce the Figure of Jesus Christ to myth or fiction ; the absurdity of such attempts is too patent to need refutation. We would merely remind the reader that, even had none of the Gospels come down to us, we should have irrefragable and detailed testimony to the historical Jesus in the Letters of the Apostle Paul, written in the fifth and sixth decades of the first century by one who was closely acquainted with men who had themselves been on terms of personal intimacy with our Lord. From these Epistles alone we should have learned that a mighty Personage of the name of Jesus, many of whose disciples still survived (1 Cor. xv. 6) had recently been exercising a remarkable activity in Palestine ; that among His followers there had been an inner circle of twelve (*ib.* verse 5), some of whom he names (Gal. ii. 8, 9) as personally known to him, as was also one of the Lord's brothers, James, who occupied a leading position in

the early Church (Gal. i. 19. ii. 9), having joined the circle of the Apostles; that this community believed Jesus to be the Messiah or Christ, whose coming the Jews still expected; that He was reputed to be of Davidic descent (Rom. i. 3); that in some way He had been betrayed and delivered to His enemies (1 Cor. xi. 3) and been crucified; that on the eve of His death He had established the rite of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23–25); that His disciples were convinced that He had manifested Himself to them repeatedly after His death (*ib.* xv. 5–8); and that His return was anticipated by them in the near future, on the authority of His own promise (1 Thess. iv. 15–17). The Pauline Epistles are sufficient, and more than sufficient, to dispose of the so-called "Christ-myth" theory.

Handbooks giving a concise and intelligible account of the methods and main conclusions of the modern study of the Gospels are plentiful, and there is no need to do over again in this place what has been done many times; the non-specialist reader may be referred to such treatments of the subject as will be found in Prof. Burkitt's brief and lucid little work, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus,* Prof. E. F. Scott's *Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel,* Dr. Peake's succinct *Critical Introduction to the New Testament,* or the articles in the well-known *Commentary on the Bible* edited by that scholar.

II

The same considerations apply to the outward setting in which the life of Jesus was lived, and in which the events of His ministry took place. The land which gave Him birth, the civilization of His day, the secular administration of the country by the Roman Government and the Herods respectively, the religious parties and authorities of which we shall hear so much in the course of our story—all these have been described time after time in greater or lesser detail, and the general reader who lacks the time for studying a work like Schürer's *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* may turn to brief manuals like Fairweather's *The Background of the Gospels,* Muirhead's *The Times of Christ,* or Carpenter's *Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived.*

But there is one feature in the thought of that age, the full importance of which has only recently begun to be appreciated, and of which we must needs give a concise account before addressing ourselves to our main task; we mean those hopes and

expectations which were so profoundly agitating the Jewish people at the beginning of our era—their fervent expectation of the Kingdom of God and of the Messiah.

The ardour of that expectation in itself tells us a great deal about the conditions prevailing in those days, when all who had any pretension to patriotism or piety were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 38), or for "the consolation of Israel" (*ib.* 25), and individuals felt persuaded that they should not see death before they had seen the Lord's Messiah (*ib.* 26). When a nation lives so passionately in the future as did the Jews in the time of our Lord, it is because it has despaired of the present; such an assurance, as was theirs, of an incredibly glorious and imminent change for the better bears all too eloquent testimony to the wretchedness of the actual state of affairs which inspires these dreams, much as a famished man dreams of Lucullan banquets. When existing conditions are all but insufferable, the pulse of the people will become febrile, and its religious life will manifest a certain morbid intensity, as of a creation groaning and travailing together in pain, sustained only by the hope of an early deliverance from bondage into freedom. Men feel that the times are so inexpressibly evil that a change for the better *must* somehow be at the door; just because the hour is so dark, day-break must be at hand, to flood the world in the twinkling of an eye. The air will be full of rumours, anticipations, confident predictions of "things which must shortly come to pass," of the swift-approaching end of the age and the commencement of another, in which the last shall be first and the first last, in which the oppressed will triumph over their oppressors, and God's long-delayed retribution will cast down the mighty from their seat, and exalt the humble and meek.

Such a feverish epoch was that upon which Judaism had entered in the two centuries preceding our era; and the passionate longing for deliverance expressed itself in that apocalyptic literature which enjoyed so immense a vogue in those troubled years, a literature of visions and prophecies often as wild and incoherent as the fantasies of a fever-patient, full of an imagery sometimes grandiose but oftener grotesque, not seldom fiercely vindictive, revelling in the requital to be exacted from the gentiles; a literature which was immensely popular, and much of which came from Galilee.

The idea of a future Kingdom of God was of course not a new one in Judaism, though in the older writings of the Hebrew

scriptures we read of the JUDGMENT of Yahveh, the DAY of Yahveh, rather than of His KINGDOM. It was assumed, to begin with, that sooner or later Yahveh, if only for His name's sake, must vindicate His people's cause against the heathen; later on, as the religion of Israel became more ethical, it was held that Israel itself would not be exempt from this coming judgment, which was not necessarily conceived as involving the end of the age. The latter conception is characteristic of post-exilic times, when prolonged disappointment and the failure of national aspirations led the people to concentrate its hope upon a catastrophic intervention on the part of Yahveh, when vengeance should befall the heathen oppressor, and the chosen peoples' independence should be restored, under the sole sovereignty of God.

This eschatological hope meets us first full-grown in the Book of Daniel (167 B.C.), where we also find the Kingdom of God used for the first time as a quasi-technical term. Formerly the term *malchuth*, "the kingdom," had been used to designate the heathen world-power; to this conception the *malchuth Yahveh*, the Kingdom of God, came to be opposed. Confronted with the spectacle of ungodly might apparently triumphant, the Hebrew mind began to formulate the question, Who is going to be dominant? To that question there was but one answer—Yahveh, the God of Israel. What we translate "the Kingdom of God" meant thus rather His King*ship*, His reign rather than His realm, though He was expected to re-establish the Jewish kingdom as well as to annihilate the foreign persecutors of His afflicted people. At a later stage this restoration was viewed as only a temporary and preliminary phase, to be followed by the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the fixing of the eternal fate of the saved and lost respectively. As pessimism deepened, the idea became prevalent that no process of renovation could make this defiled earth worthy of being the scene of the Divine Rule; hope fled beyond the clouds, from earth to heaven, so much so that in the century preceding our era scarcely any apocalyptic writer expresses the older expectation of the everlasting Kingdom of God on earth. It seems likely, however, that the view which located the coming Kingdom in the heavens, or which spoke of the descent of a heavenly Jerusalem, was confined to the thoughtful and better educated strata rather than spread among the masses; the latter, no doubt, held their hope in the most concrete shape—the overthrow of Rome and the renewal of the nation's political independence under a scion of the old Davidic dynasty.

This, in the time of our Lord, was undoubtedly the most popular form of the messianic hope: the restored Kingdom would flourish under a descendant of Israel's idealized hero-king, Yahveh's Anointed, "the Christ of God" (Luke ix. 20). It is true that the idea of a Messiah is not integral to that of the Kingdom of God, which in its purest presentation rather means that Yahveh Himself, and none other, will exercise rule over His nation; nevertheless, as the Hebrew people contrasted the glories of David's reign with the political and economic hardships they were groaning under, it is easy to understand how they would come to feel that if anyone could save them, it would be one of David's line, reproducing all the most splendid characteristics of his royal ancestor.

For the first expressions of such a hope we must go back many centuries; it is hinted rather than formally announced in Amos ix. 11, which promises that in the Day of Judgment Yahveh will raise up again the fallen tabernacle of David; still more distantly perhaps is it hinted in Mic. v. 2, which prophesies that out of Bethlehem Ephrathah—David's ancestral city—a ruler of Israel shall come forth. In Isa. ix. 7, this coming deliverer is described as a conquering hero, a man of war, who shall ascend the throne of David; in *ib.* xi. 1–9 we are still more clearly told that the ideal ruler of the future will be a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, though his reign is depicted in idyllic rather than warlike colours. Other references to a future deliverer of David's seed occur in such passages as Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 and Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, while Jer. xxxiii. 17—regarded as a later addition—foretells a succession of Davidic rulers, and not merely one destined saviour of his people.

The Davidic Messiah, however, disappears altogether from Second and Third Isaiah (chaps. xl.–lv., lvi.–lxvi.); indeed, the former messianic *rôle* is assigned to Cyrus the Persian (xliv. 28, xlv. 1–4), while it must be clearly understood that the Figure of the Suffering Servant of Yahveh (*ib.* liii.) was never interpreted in a messianic sense until Christian times. No allusion whatever to a Messiah is to be found in the prophecies of Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Joel, or Daniel; the "Son of man" of whom we read in Dan. vii. 13, though interpreted messianically from the first pre-Christian century downward, *e.g.* in Enoch xxxvii.–lxxi., stands for the ideal Israel, and neither for the Messiah nor for any individual figure.

In the era following the return from the Exile there was a transient tendency to revive the hope of a Davidic king in the

person of Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin (Hag. ii. 20–23; Zech. iv. and vi.), but Zerubbabel soon receded to a secondary rank. In the literature of the second century B.C. there is an almost unbroken silence as to a Messiah sprung from the ancient dynasty; instead we find in the apocalyptic Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs the expectation of a Messiah who should arise, not from the tribe of Judah, but from that of Levi, which was the tribe of the Maccabees, and the "messianic" 110th Psalm has been proved to be addressed to Simon the Maccabee, after that great man had accepted the supreme ecclesiastical and civil power, conferred upon him by national decree 142 B.C.

This too, however, proved only a passing phase; the glory of the Maccabeans faded, and with it the expectation of a Messiah sprung from their line. Instead, we now come upon quite a different conception of the Messiah, who is no longer represented as the descendant of David or a scion of the Maccabees, but as a celestial, supernatural being, pre-existent from before the foundations of the earth, in form like unto a son of man, dwelling with God until the fullness of time, when he should come down from heaven, and initiate the Kingdom. The suddenness with which this new conception emerges in the writings of the period constitutes one of the puzzles of a very complex subject, and it is surmised that influences derived from foreign—especially Persian—religious speculations were at work in effecting this transformation. In chaps. xxxvii.–lxxi. of 1 Enoch (*c.* 104–78 B.C.) we find the Messiah designated as the Son of man, described as pre-existent, possessed of universal dominion and one to whom all judgment was to be committed; in the same document He is called the Christ, the Righteous One, and the Elect One. Thus in 1 Enoch xlvi. 3 we read, "This is the Son of man who hath righteousness, and with whom dwelleth righteousness"; in chap. xlv. 3, "On that day mine Elect one shall sit on the throne of glory, and shall try their works"; in chap. xlviii. 4, "He shall be the light of the gentiles, and the hope of those that are troubled of heart"; in chap. lxix. 27, "And He sat on the throne of His glory, and the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of man"; in chap. xlviii. 2, "And at that hour the Son of man was named in the presence of the Lord of spirits, and His name before the head of days."

The importance of passages like these in a pre-Christian work can hardly be overrated; for they establish the fact that *some of the main elements of Christology were ready and in circulation*

for nearly a hundred years before the appearance of Jesus. The development of our Lord's own consciousness could not but be powerfully influenced by those messianic conceptions which He found in possession of the field; while on the other hand it followed that as soon as He was identified with the Christ, He could not fail to be credited with the messianic attributes of pre-existence in heaven, universal dominion and judgeship, and power of life and death.

But the idea of the celestial Messiah did not hold an undivided sway for long, if it ever did so; presently there was a revival of the older form of the hope in a national deliverer sprung from Israel's royal line, a thought specially emphasized in the so-called Psalms of Solomon, which belong to the middle of the first century B.C., and in which we read such a characteristic passage as the following:

> Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David,
> At the time which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel, Thy servant,
> And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers,
> And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her down in destruction (xvii. 23–25).

These two types of messianic expectation, then, dominated the Jewish imagination of our period side by side, tending to merge into one another—the one more earthly-concrete, the other more heavenly-abstract. Doubtless among the masses the more popular one would be that of the descendant of Israel's glorious king, who should free his people, avenge them on their enemies, and rule over them in righteousness. Both conceptions are continually reflected in our Gospels, and naturally the two could never perfectly coalesce; but the firm belief of the nation in the coming of the Messiah, in the intervention of God on behalf of the chosen race, cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that in the closing days of Jerusalem many of the Jews, in the doomed city, face to face with immediate destructions clung until their last breath to the conviction that God must surely step in and by a miracle save His own.

We shall not enter into the many fantastic speculations that had grown around and out of the messianic hope by the time of our Lord's appearance. There is something overstrained, something unhealthy, about the temper of the age which produced and nourished itself upon that apocalyptic literature, the significance of which for the history of early Christianity has only

recently begun to be appreciated. Being assured that the end of the present evil age was near at hand, that the advent of the Messiah and of the Kingdom was imminent, men lost themselves in endless and unprofitable calculations as to when these things should be, and what should be the sign when they should be all about to be accomplished (Mark xiii. 4). With their nerves in a state of continual tension, the people were for ever in a mood to call out " Lo, here," or " Lo, there," and to acclaim as the promised saviour any one who should boldly assume that part.

That was no doubt one of the reasons, though not the only one, why our Lord was by no means anxious to declare Himself the Messiah, while He met all eager, impatient inquiries concerning the consummation, all manipulations of dates and prophecies, with the simple statement, " Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only " (Matt. xxiv. 36). But in this sanity and soberness He stood very much alone in the midst of a fevered, hectic society, given over to fanciful exegesis and computations and wild flights of undisciplined imaginings. Nevertheless, if it is true that the most commonplace of mortals is not wholly explained by his environment, it is no less certain that even the greatest Personage in the chronicles of the race is not to be understood apart from it. The apocalyptic thought of His age profoundly affected the thought of our Lord Himself, the eschatological expectations of His people were the atmosphere He breathed from His earliest days ; *and when He began to preach the Good News in the formula, " The Kingdom of God is at hand," He meant what His hearers understood—not a far-distant change to be gradually brought about, but a sudden, glorious and complete consummation, to be expected in the immediate future.*

It is from this point of view that the whole momentous story is to be understood.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY CHILD

In an age and an environment seething with those messianic expectations which were described in the preceding pages, there appeared in the year 29 a young Galilean preacher, Jesus of Nazareth, with the electrifying message, " The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe in the Gospel " (Mark i. 15).

That this proclamation meant, as we said at the close of our Introduction, the approaching deliverance of Israel from the Roman overlordship, and the restoration of the Hebrew monarchy in a glorified, supernatural form under the regency of God's Anointed, was obvious ; it was less obvious whether the bearer of the Good News was himself the expected deliverer, or the forerunner who was to prepare his way (Mal. iii. 1). To those who heard the tidings Jesus uttered—the population of the Galilean lake-side villages—the latter alternative must have seemed by far the more probable, for there was nothing in His guise or mien to suggest His identity with the warlike hero to whose coming they looked forward ; besides, He made no messianic claims on His own behalf, and, had He done so, they might have met with anything rather than ready credence, for was He not well known in the district as a carpenter—one of a family of brothers and sisters that had grown up under His hearers' eyes ? (Mark vi. 3).

But if not acclaimed as the Messiah, He was received with every mark of enthusiasm by those whom He assured of the imminent fulfilment of their dearest hopes ; crowds hung on His lips, disciples began to attach themselves to Him, and His popularity was enhanced by His exercise of remarkable powers of healing. After a while, however, this instantaneous success began to show signs of waning. Not only were there those who, having " supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear " (Luke xix. 11), were disappointed by the delay ; but, as He developed His theme of that Kingdom, His treatment of it must have appealed less and less to the perfervid, anti-Roman

nationalism of the multitudes. For He raised no standard of revolt, issued no call to action, expressed no detestation of the foreigners ; worse, His detestation seemed to be reserved for men who were held in high esteem by the people for their eminent piety and learning—to wit, the scribes and Pharisees. Had He exhorted the crowds to observe the Sabbath more rigidly, had He set an example of the utmost respect for the ceremonial and ritual side of religion, had He practised more than common austerities of fasting, more than common aloofness from publicans and sinners, He would have been held in veneration as a saint ; but His avowed disregard for the minutiæ of the law, His unorthodox views as to Sabbath observance, His readiness to mingle with the despised classes just named—finally, His open breach with the scribes and Pharisees over the question of clean and unclean (Mark vii. 1–23)—alienated popular sympathy from Him.

After a period of withdrawal from Galilee (Mark vii. 24) where He was no longer safe, we find Him in Jerusalem during the Passover of A.D. 30 ; once more He gathers crowds round Him, but He is fighting a losing battle, and, after further conflicts with the religious authorities, He is arrested, condemned to death, and crucified.

But now events were to take a wholly unforeseen turn. The execution of Jesus, instead of proving the end of the movement associated with His name, proved its new beginning ; His disciples were assured that they had beheld Him alive after His body had been laid to rest ; their enthusiasm not only revived, but redoubled, and they openly proclaimed Him as the Messiah, who would return from heaven as God's Vicegerent, to inaugurate His reign. As for His death—seemingly the uttermost humiliation—they declared it to be in reality the Divinely ordained means for man's redemption ; indeed, only through faith in Him was salvation to be attained, who was " unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God " (1 Cor. i. 24).

It was natural that the first generation of Christians should be interested only in the last phase of the life of Jesus—His ministry, teachings, and death. Indeed, our earliest New Testament writer, St. Paul, took little interest in any event in the Lord's career save only His Passion ; he was content to preach Christ crucified, and, though he subscribed to the current belief which declared the Messiah to be " of the seed of David according to the

flesh" (Rom. i. 3), he treated any knowledge of Him "after the flesh" as strictly subordinate, and even negligible (2 Cor. v. 16). For our oldest Evangelist, "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" is His baptism at the hand of John; nothing, or next to nothing, was probably known of the previous life of Jesus when Mark composed his narrative. Indeed, with two exceptions, the whole of the New Testament witness concerning the Saviour's earthly days refers to their closing and public portion, while His private antecedents are passed over.

Within the following thirty years, however, the desire arose, as it could hardly fail to do, for fuller knowledge of the Lord's origin; and, the want being once felt among the faithful, imagination set to work on the scanty data that were available, and proceeded to fill the gap. Two traditions grew up side by side, differing from each other in many respects, but agreeing in three essential points, viz. that Jesus was descended from King David; that He had seen the light in Bethlehem, David's city; and that He was the Son of no earthly father, but was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. Into these traditions, and their value as historical documents, we shall now have to inquire.

As a necessary preliminary, however, we shall have to remind ourselves of a very widespread tendency of antiquity, viz. to surround the cradle of its heroes with supernatural features, to represent their birth as supernaturally foretold by dreams or oracles or celestial messengers, to credit them with more than earthly origin. In the Old Testament we have stories of "wondrous births" told in connection with Isaac, Samson, and Samuel; a legend in the Talmud spoke of Moses as born of a virgin mother. According to Philo of Alexandria, Samuel was "born of a human mother," who "became pregnant after receiving Divine seed" (Ed. Mangey, i. 273); Zipporah was found by Moses "pregnant by no mortal" (i. 147); Tamar was "pregnant through Divine seed" (i. 598), and Isaac was "not the result of generation, but the shaping of the unbegotten" (i. 215).

Among the Greeks, if the achievements of some celebrated personage lifted him distinctly above the common level of mankind—if he was one of those whom the Lacedæmonians used to call admiringly θεῖος ἀνήρ, a Divine man (*Eth. Nic.*, viii. 1, 3)—the same admiration would presently take the form of ascribing to him celestial parentage. Not only the heroes of legend—Herakles, Theseus, Perseus, and the rest—were believed to be the sons of Divine fathers and human mothers, but the same belief

was held with regard to historical characters. Thus Pythagoras was represented as the son of Apollo and Parthenis—perhaps a suggestive name—Alexander the Great as the son of Zeus and Olympias, Augustus as the miraculously conceived son of Apollo. Indeed, in the funeral discourse upon Plato, delivered by his nephew Speusippus, the latter, as quoted by Diogenes Laertius, told the story that Ariston, the husband of Plato's mother, Periktione, was warned by Apollo in a dream, immediately after his marriage, that the son whom Periktione should bear would be his—*i.e.* Apollo's—offspring. Such was the psychological climate of the ancient world.

Given such a disposition to assume the miraculous or superhuman origin of the illustrious, it was to be *a priori* expected that similar legends would spring up and surround the birth of Jesus Christ. In certain respects, indeed, the shape which the story of His ancestry and advent was to take might be described as laid down in advance. For instance, since He was the Messiah, He *must* have been of Davidic descent, and a native of Bethlehem, for so were the prophecies of Isa. xi. 1–10 and Mic. v. 2 currently interpreted. And, again, since in His capacity as God's Anointed He received the well-understood regal title of "Son of God," and although that title signified originally sonship by adoption, the door was at least opened to another interpretation, viz. that of sonship by generation. Davidic descent and Divine generation were no doubt incompatible conceptions, and at first it was held that Jesus, sprung from the old royal lineage, was declared the Son of God on the occasion of His Baptism, just as the king became God's son in the act of assuming his royal office (Ps. ii. 7; *cf.* Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27.[1] Nevertheless, in the atmosphere of the first and second centuries, an atmosphere extraordinarily favourable to the mythopœic instinct, it was but a short step from the use of the appellation "Son of God" to the inference of a Divine procreative act.

To strict or classic Judaism such an idea was of course abhorrent, nor did it all at once, or without a struggle, supplant the earlier conception of Christ as the long-foretold "root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples"; but the soil in which the new religion grew—even the soil of Palestine itself—was by no means strictly Judaic. Palestine was, as a matter of fact, deeply impregnated with the pervading Greek culture; separated from the scenes of the Lord's main activity only by the breadth

[1] According to the Codex Bezæ and the Itala, the Voice heard at the Lord's Baptism uses the exact words of Ps. ii. 7, "Thou art my Son; *this day* have I begotten thee."

of the Lake of Galilee were purely Greek cities, in whose shrines and theatres alike was set forth the legendary lore of Hellas; Jerusalem itself, for all its temple, its priests and scribes, was permeated by the Græco-Roman atmosphere. It was impossible that the ancient stories of saviour-divinities, who were the sons of gods by mortal mothers, should not have become familiar to the urban populations of whatever race throughout Syria; nor is it in itself improbable that such stories should have exercised some influence, unsuspected yet none the less real, upon the shaping of the early Christian tradition. In proportion as Christianity became de-Judaized and infiltrated with Greek elements, such phrases as "Son of God" and "begotten of God" were bound to acquire a new significance.

Doubtless the process did not accomplish itself without resistance; doubtless it did so only gradually. The first steps which piety and poetry, working hand in hand, had to achieve were to connect "Jesus of Nazareth" (Mark i. 24, x. 47; John i. 45, etc.; Acts iii. 6, etc.) with Bethlehem and with David. If He was the Messiah, His descent and birthplace were predetermined; and, *per contra*, if David was His ancestor, and David's city the place where He saw the light, these circumstances were proofs of His Messiahship.

The Lord's connection with Israel's hero-king is traced in Matt. i. 1–17 and Luke iii. 23–38 by means of genealogical tables. The one important feature in these genealogies is that they both trace the Davidic descent of Jesus through His mother's husband, Joseph; that, indeed, is their *raison d'être*. In the eyes of the writers of these lists, Jesus was the son of Joseph, who is twice over described by Luke (i. 27 and ii. 4) as "of the house of David." To give us the catalogue of Joseph's ancestors, and to show that *he* was a scion of Israel's royal line, would have served no purpose, had he not been regarded as the actual father of our Lord; and the words "as was supposed," in Luke iii. 23, represent a very obvious afterthought.

Apart from establishing the earliest tradition of the paternity of Jesus, the genealogies are of no value, if only because they are hopelessly irreconcilable; what they do show is that, while the name of the Lord's father was still remembered, that of His paternal grandfather was no longer known with certainty, for it is given as Jacob by Matthew, as Eli by Luke. The artificiality of Matthew's catalogue becomes apparent when we note that, in order to satisfy his taste for producing three groups of fourteen links each, he omits four of the kings; and its trustworthiness

is further impaired by the author's apparent confusion of King Asa with Asaph, and King Amon with Amos. Nor is Luke's list necessarily more reliable than Matthew's; so much only is sure, that *had either Evangelist wished to prove what became afterwards the dominant view of the Lord's birth, he would have given us Mary's, and not Joseph's, supposed ancestors.*

The fictitious character of the genealogies does not, of course, disprove our Lord's Davidic descent; but we must remember that among the early Christians there existed a very strong *desire* to prove such descent—to show that ancient prophecy had found its fulfilment in Jesus. On the other hand, His own pointed question, "How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David?" (Mark xii. 35–37) seems a virtual repudiation of that theory, or a veiled claim to Messiahship notwithstanding the Speaker's known non-Davidic ancestry.

In the second place, it was necessary, in view of the strong national belief which expected the Messiah to come from Bethlehem (John vii. 42), and the corresponding disposition to doubt the Messiahship of a native of Galilee (*ib.* 41), to show that "Jesus the Nazarene," as He was popularly called (Mark xiv. 67, xvi. 6), was in reality a native of "the village where David was" (John vii. 42). On this main point both Matthew and Luke are agreed; but their respective accounts of the sequence of events through which the fulfilment of Mic. v. 2 was brought to pass differ widely, and, indeed, irreconcilably.

In Matthew's narrative Bethlehem was the actual domicile of Joseph and Mary (ii. 11); they depart from thence with the young child, by night, for Egypt, Joseph having been warned in a dream by the angel of the Lord of Herod's designs upon the Infant's life (*ib.* 13). From Egypt they return into the land of Israel, being instructed by the same angelic agency of Herod's death, in words exactly recalling those used in Exod. iv. 19, when Moses is told to return to Midian; but as the land of Israel—*i.e.*, Judæa—is by no means a safe place of residence for them under the rule of Archelaus, they are yet again supernaturally directed to withdraw into Galilee, and take up their abode in Nazareth, for the express purpose of fulfilling an unverifiable prophecy, according to which the Messiah "should be called a Nazarene."

But this Matthean version of the Nativity, which represents Bethlehem as the original, and Nazareth only as the adopted home of Joseph and Mary, is directly contradicted by the Lucan

account, according to which they resided in Nazareth before the birth of Jesus (ii. 4). As Matthew brings the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Nazareth, so Luke moves the Lord's parents from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral city, for the purpose, nominally, of enrolling themselves there under the census "made when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (ii. 1–7), but in reality that the Messiah might be born in the place appointed by prophecy. Matthew has nothing to say of this journey and enrolment; Luke, on the other hand, is silent both as to Herod's plot to kill the Holy Child and the flight into Egypt, and knows nothing of Matthew's stories concerning the wise men from the east come to do homage to the future King of the Jews, the guiding star, or the massacre of infants in and around Bethlehem. Nothing is plainer than that we are dealing with two separate traditions, which it is impossible to harmonize.

We must, accordingly, turn to the features peculiar to each of these traditions, with a view to discovering what is their historical value, and whether we can give preference to one or the other of them as statements of fact. The two stories—Matthew's, concerning the plot of Herod, and Luke's concerning the census of Quirinius—seem to exclude each other; the question is whether either of them appears credible.

Now the oracle or dream sent to a ruler, warning him that danger will threaten him from an infant yet to be born, and his unsuccessful attempt to destroy the child in question, is a picturesque *motif* belonging to the common stock of popular legend. Thus, *e.g.*, the father of Œdipus, Laïos, King of Thebes, is warned by an oracle that his son, if allowed to live, will slay him, and has him exposed, with pierced feet; but the child is rescued by a herdsman, and lives to carry out the prediction, an unwitting parricide. Astyages, King of Media, Herodotus relates (i. 107 ff.), had a dream concerning his daughter Mandane, which caused him much uneasiness; when he consulted his Magians, they told him that Mandane would bear a son who would dethrone his grandfather. He accordingly ordered the child, after it had been born, to be destroyed by Harpagus, one of his kinsmen; but the latter was prevailed upon to spare the life of the young Cyrus, who in due course fulfilled the dream of Astyages by deposing him. And, to come nearer to Jewish affairs, there was a tradition, preserved by Josephus (*Antt.*, ii. 9. 2), according to which Pharaoh's command to kill the Hebrew children was

given after he had been warned by a scribe of the birth of a boy who would by and by endanger him. The material, then, for the story we find in Matthew lay ready to hand. If the tyrannical and bloodthirsty Herod was only too apt to recall the persecuting Pharaoh; if Christ was the Giver of a new dispensation, as Moses had brought the old one to his people; nothing came more easy to the midrashic fancy of the age than to credit Herod with the design to take the life of the infant Jesus, and with something like the same wholesale slaughter of Jewish children as Pharaoh had planned of old. Historically, nothing whatever is known of such a massacre of infants at Bethlehem; not even Josephus, who has much to tell of Herod's cruelty, makes the slightest allusion to such a crime, which on other grounds, too, is more than questionable. For Herod, even if he was "exceeding wroth" with the wise men for not telling him which was the child destined to be the King of the Jews, could have quite easily discovered which house in the little town of Bethlehem had received these foreign visitors who had already caused such a stir in Jerusalem, and which the child to whom they had paid homage and offered their precious gifts.[1]

If history is silent as to the alleged destruction of the babes of Bethlehem, neither does it tell us—as Josephus might easily have done—of that visit of wise men from the east in search of the future Messiah which Matthew relates. On the other hand, it has been conjectured, not without a certain measure of plausibility, that this story of the journey and adoration of the Magi may have been modelled—of course, unconsciously—on a real incident reported by Pliny and Dio Cassius. In the year 66 Tiridates, King of Parthia, accompanied by a train of Magians (*cf.* Matt. ii. 1, 7), paid a ceremonial visit to Rome, where he worshipped (*ib.* 11) the emperor as his god, returning afterwards to the east by another way (*ib.* 12) (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, xxx. 6; Dio Cassius, xliii. 1–2, 5, 7). The parallel is at any rate sufficiently remarkable to merit mention.

That the guiding star of which Matthew tells us shines in no other firmament than that of legend should be obvious. It was a widespread belief that the birth and death of eminent personages was marked by celestial signs, and such phenomena were alleged to have taken place at the birth of Alexander the Great, of Mithridates, of Julius Cæsar, and Augustus. A star was also said to have shone before Æneas, directing him which way to

[1] For "gold and frankincense" in connection with "good tidings" see Isa. lx. 6, R.V. marg.

take, and guiding him to Laurentum, on the shore of Latium, when it disappeared. Historical criticism applied to what is so plainly poetic fiction must always appear rather ludicrous; else one would point out that if the star had led the wise men from the east as far as Jerusalem (Matt. ii. 2), and again "went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was" (*ib.* 9), there was no need for them to make inquiries in the capital, a feature serving no other purpose than that of introducing Herod. But what argument can there be needed to show that this story of a star which goes before a group of travellers, and then rests over the house which is the goal of their quest, belongs to the poetry, and not to the history, of religion?

When, finally, Matthew tells us that the Lord's parents fled with Him into Egypt—an incident not only unknown to, but implicitly contradicted by, Luke—in order "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son," it becomes practically certain that it was a misunderstood "prophecy" which gave rise to the idea of a sojourn of Jesus in Egypt, rather than such a sojourn which suggested the quotation of Hos. xi. 1.

In Luke's narrative we shall distinguish between the quasi-historical introduction (ii. 1–5) and the rest of his story, which proclaims its poetical character. There is no more exquisite idyll in the whole of literature than this of the Holy Child cradled in the manger, the shepherds watching over their flocks by night in the field, the appearance of the angel of the Lord announcing the Saviour's birth, the multitude of the heavenly host chanting their carol of glory to God and peace on earth, and the shepherds' visit to the new-born Babe and His parents. This is poetry of the loveliest, full of a charm which it is impossible to resist; only a pedant, it seems to us, would try either to prove or to disprove what is so plainly the work of devout and tender imagination.

Here and there we may be struck by parallels which, without necessarily implying dependence, are worth mention. Thus, *e.g.*, shepherds play a part in the nativity story of Mithra, and if the latter was born in a cave, so, according to a tradition of the second century, was Jesus.[1] Again, as the birth of the Christ, so that of the Buddha is accompanied by a burst of celestial light, by angelic celebrations, and the reign of peace and goodwill.

[1] The "manger" in which the Babe is laid may be nothing more than a stall for cattle, or stable; caves were often used for stabling purposes.

Above all, there are certain ancient inscriptions referring to the Emperor Augustus, where he is spoken of as a saviour destined to make every war to cease, and in one of which we read that "*the birthday of this god is become the beginning of glad tidings* (εὐαγγελίων) regarding him for the world." Here it may be impossible to rule out the possibility that phrases originally applied to the earthly world-ruler were transferred to the Heavenly King, the true Prince of Peace, by His worshippers; even so, we should only feel that this was a case in which Christian piety had been most happily inspired.

It is otherwise when we turn from the passages in which Luke gives rein to his artistic feeling to the verses in which he attempts to write history. There is, indeed, hardly a single statement among those in which he tells us how Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem which survives a dispassionate scrutiny. The total silence of history concerning an imperial census in the reign of Augustus renders such an event highly improbable; and if Jesus, as Matthew states and Luke clearly implies, was born in the lifetime of Herod the Great, who died 4 B.C., a Roman census of Judæa was at that time quite out of the question, Herod being an independent ruler, and ranking as an "ally" of Rome. The "first census" spoken of by the Evangelist did not take place until after the deposition of Herod's successor, Archelaus (A.D. 6), when Judæa became part of the Roman province of Syria; at that time Quirinius was indeed legate, but the census was not an imperial one. Even if it were proved that Quirinius had held office at an earlier period, the suggestion that he might have presided over a census during that time, and that *this* was the event referred to by Luke, is untenable; we know that the census carried out under Quirinius in A.D. 7 caused the popular revolt alluded to in Acts v. 37, and it did so precisely because it was the *first* time that such an affront had been offered to Jewish susceptibilities. And, in any case, Joseph, who was a subject of the tetrarch Antipas, was not liable to Roman taxation.

What is utterly incredible, and without a shred of support from what we know of Roman methods, is that Joseph would have had to journey to Bethlehem to be enrolled, because that was his ancestral town; there is no reason for us to assume, in the absence of proof to that effect, that the Roman Government would have issued so unnecessary and inconvenient a regulation, involving a miniature migration of the inhabitants of the country. And, finally, if none of these difficulties existed, or if they could all be satisfactorily explained, nothing would convince an unprejudiced

mind that Joseph would have taken with him, on a journey from Galilee to Judæa, his wife—still less his betrothed—in her then physical condition. There is no possible reason for such a step —save only the *a priori* necessity for the Messiah to be born in Bethlehem! In the face of so many improbabilities and inaccuracies, the attempt of the Third Evangelist to connect the birth of Jesus, the Son of Nazarene parents, in deference to popular expectation, with Bethlehem, must be pronounced unsuccessful.

In the nativity story as told by Luke there is, as we already said, no reference to any flight into Egypt caused by fear of Herod's evil intentions; instead, the parents go quite openly to Jerusalem, there to present the Holy Child in the temple, and offer sacrifice; and from thence they return without any secrecy "into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth" (ii. 22, 23, 39). We may think it doubtful, and more than doubtful, that every infant born in a Jewish household had to be presented in Jerusalem; the law (Exod. xiii. 2, 12, 15) prescribed no such religious duty, which in the nature of things could not have been carried out in the majority of cases. The presentation, however, has for its object to introduce the episodes of Simeon and Anna, who bear their prophetic witness to the high destiny in store for the Infant; He is none other than the Lord's Christ, and His coming is joyful news indeed "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem"—a phrase which expresses the current form of the messianic hope, viz. the appearance of a national liberator and restorer of Jewish independence.[1] These incidents in the temple, like the presentation itself, embody, no doubt, very ancient traditional material; and, while they are not records of fact, they attest the fervent expectation which that age cherished of a Messiah who should be sprung from the old royal line, and reign over his people after throwing off the Roman yoke. It was this *rôle* which popular imagination mistakenly assigned to Jesus—this hope which He failed to fulfil, in the sense that He never attempted to fulfil it. The reader will note that Joseph's and Mary's "marvel" at Simeon's enraptured lyrical outburst (ii. 33) is hardly compatible with the very definite knowledge conveyed to them by the angel of the annunciation.

A birth may, however, have been foretold by prophets and angels, it may be accompanied by every description of signs and wonders, it may take place in the particular locality indicated

[1] *Cf.* Luke ii. 38; xxiv. 21.

by ancient oracles, and yet not involve any departure from the order of nature itself. All the features of Matthew's and Luke's accounts which we have so far examined not only admit of the Lord's birth having come to pass in conformity with natural law, *i.e.*, in the course of the wedded life of Joseph and Mary, but they presuppose as much. If one of the titles of Jesus, as the Messiah, is the Son of David, if Matthew and Luke are so anxious to establish *Joseph's* descent from Israel's great king, it is obvious that their motive was the desire to trace Jesus Himself to David as His ancestor, through Joseph. That the original tradition not merely implied but explicitly asserted the paternity of Joseph becomes further evident from such passages as Luke ii. 27, 41, and 43, where we read of the "parents" (γονεῖς) of Jesus; *ib.* 33, where "his father and mother" are spoken of, and *ib.* 48, where Mary, addressing her young Son, says, "Thy father and I sought thee." To the same effect are the questions, Luke iv. 22, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Matt. xiii. 55, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" and John vi. 42, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Still more direct is the testimony of John i. 45, where Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." In all these passages we find the same testimony borne to the Lord's earthly origin, without either *arrière-pensée* or correction, and doubtless this was the earliest belief of the nascent Christian community concerning its Founder.

Presently, however, a rival theory sprang up in what was, as we have already seen, an exceedingly favourable soil and climate for such a growth.[1] The saviour-hero, begotten of Zeus or Apollo and born of a human mother, was familiar to Greek thought and worship; in Judaism, too, the idea of generation by direct Divine intervention had latterly gained entrance. If Philo could believe in the miraculous birth of a Moses, an Isaac, a Samuel, it was not *per se* unlikely that the title "Son of God," especially as applied to the Messiah, would in time be interpreted in a realistic sense. That a misunderstood prophecy like Isa. vii. 14—where the event predicted is the maternity of a young woman, mistakenly translated "virgin" in the Septuagint—helped such an interpretation into being is at least possible. In any case, the ancient world was prepared for the assertion of the Lord's birth by a virgin mother as it meets us in Matt. i. 18–25 and Luke i. 34, 35.

Familiar as we are with these passages, it is not until closer

[1] Professor Burkitt suggests that the theory in question may have originated at Antioch.

inspection that we realize that they form a foreign element in the narratives, with the general tenor of which they are sharply at variance. These verses alone assert the Lord's birth from a virgin ; and, in denying the paternity of Joseph, they run directly counter to the whole intention of the rest of Matthew's and Luke's stories, which are founded on that very assumption. Just as Joseph is referred to again and again as the father of Jesus, so the supernatural birth is implicitly contradicted by such a crucial incident as that in Mark iii. 20–35, where "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ" (verse 21), who declare Jesus to be out of His mind, are plainly identical with " His mother, and His brethren " (*ib.* 31). Under no circumstances could the mother who had conceived her child of the Holy Spirit have regarded Him as insane.

It may, however, be asked, If the object, say, of Matthew was to connect Jesus with the royal line through Joseph, thus establishing His position as the Messiah, would he not have told us in plain words that Joseph was His father according to the flesh ? That is a very natural query, and the answer to it is full of interest. It had been known for a long time that the original text of Matt i. 16 was involved in a great deal of uncertainty, the differences between extant manuscripts being such as to "lend plausibility to the idea that the verse did not originally contain the words which assert the virginity of the Lord's mother" (Swete). Indeed, so far as manuscript authority went, the same eminent scholar was inclined, hypothetically, and as a possibility, to admit that it might " appear that in the original Matthew the genealogy ended with the formula, ' Joseph begat Jesus.' " This hypothetical admission received support from the publication of the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript discovered by Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Lewis, and published by them in 1894, in which Matthew i. 16 reads as follows : " Jacob begat Joseph. Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the (*or* a) virgin, begat Jesus, who is called Messiah." It is true that, as has been pointed out, " this reading stands absolutely alone as regards these words " ; on the other hand, this particular manuscript is in all other respects allowed to be the most archaic of all our texts of the Gospels. What is more, transcriptional probability is entirely in favour of this isolated reading ; that is to say, it is unlikely that later copyists, working at a time when the doctrine of the virgin birth was firmly established, would have introduced changes in the text calculated to weaken that dogma. Such a reading could only be of high antiquity ; and it fairly establishes what Professor Swete had stated as a possibility, viz. that " in the original

Matthew the genealogy ended with the formula, ' Joseph begat Jesus,' " thus completing the chain which showed Him to be the true Messiah.

But if this was the original reading of Matt. i. 16, the problem of verses 18–25, which tell the story of the virgin birth, becomes more acute, and we have to ask ourselves whether these verses formed part of Matthew's Gospel in its oldest form. It is well known that the doctrine of the virgin birth was denied in the earliest days of Christianity by the Gnostic leader Cerinthus among others ; and from Epiphanius, the acknowledged patristic authority on everything pertaining to heresies, we learn the remarkable circumstance that the text of Matthew used by Cerinthus lacked this particular section. Bearing in mind the undeniable fact that the text of the Gospels underwent some amount of manipulation in the interest of dogma, probability seems to favour the theory : (1) that Matthew's Gospel, in its opening chapters, originally affirmed Jesus to be the Messiah, proving this by His descent from David through Joseph, who was stated to be His real father[1]; (2) that at a somewhat later stage the verses 18–25 of chap. i. were inserted between chap. i. 17 and chap. ii. 1, which certainly link on naturally to each other ; and (3) that then, this insertion having been made, chap. i. 16 was altered to correspond. Such, in our view, is the most probable solution of the problem under consideration.[2]

It remains for us to examine Luke's testimony to the virgin birth. We have already seen that, quite apart from the implicit meaning of the genealogy, this Gospel appears over and over again to attribute to Joseph the real paternity of our Lord. All such indications of a purely human descent, however, are definitely negatived by verses 34 and 35 of the first chapter :

> And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee : wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.

Nothing can surpass the sheer beauty and delicacy of these words, which could only have been found by a writer of the finest spiritual instincts ; but neither could any statement be more emphatic

[1] See Note A, on p. 362.

[2] Similarly, we take it that of the various readings of Luke ii. 4, that which speaks of Mary as Joseph's " wife " is older and more authentic than that which calls her his betrothed ; if it was unlikely that Joseph would have taken his wife with him to Bethlehem for the purpose of the enrolment, it is quite incredible that he would have taken his betrothed.

and unambiguous. Our attention is aroused only when we carefully read the whole passage, i. 26–38, going over it sentence by sentence. What exactly is its purport? Mary, on the eve of marriage, receives a supernatural intimation that the Son she is to bear will be called to the throne of His ancestors, that He is to re-establish the old national monarchy on an enduring basis; in other words, she is to become the mother of the long-hoped-for Messiah. Such a promise is assuredly glorious and wonderful; but it does not prepare the ground for, or lead up to, Mary's question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" In contemplating marriage, she must have contemplated motherhood, or at least have regarded it as a natural contingency. She is about to enter into wedlock; she is promised a Son, for whom a splendid future is predicted. Her inquiry, therefore, has no natural *raison d'être*; its sole purpose is to provide an opening for the declaration in the following verse.

This is still more apparent when we compare that declaration in turn with the angel's reference to Elisabeth in verse 36; to point to Mary's kinswoman with the words, "Behold, she *also* hath conceived," would be beside the mark; for an impending natural birth cannot serve to confirm the promise of a supernatural one. On the other hand, the reference to the case of Elisabeth links on naturally to the promise made in verses 31–33, where Mary is told that she is to be the mother of the Messiah. The conclusion to be drawn is that in Luke, as in Matthew, the original intention was to present Jesus as the descendant, through Joseph, of David, and His birth and messianic destiny as having been foretold to Mary when she was about to be married to Joseph; that verses 34 and 35 represent a later interpolation, the tenor of which runs altogether counter to the original tradition, which spoke of Joseph and Mary as the "parents," the "father and mother" (Luke ii. 33, 41, 48), of the Lord; and that, finally, the words "as was supposed" in the description of Jesus as the son of Joseph (*ib.* iii. 23) were inserted with an obvious "harmonizing" purpose.[1]

This view of Luke i. 34, 35, it is true, lacks manuscript authority; its recommendation, however, is its inherent reasonableness, for it explains facts which otherwise remain inexplicable. It gives us a consistent picture of One who, for all His future

[1] On linguistic grounds alone it has been doubted whether the conception which ascribes the paternity of our Lord to the Holy Spirit could have grown up on Hebrew soil at all; for the Hebrew term for "spirit"—*ruach*—is feminine, and it is noteworthy that the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews represented Jesus as referring to the Holy Spirit as His Mother.

exaltation, passed through a normal infancy and boyhood, was "subject" to His parents, grew and waxed strong, advanced in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and men. Into this simple, human chronicle of physical, mental, moral, and spiritual development the stories of supernatural birth do not fit; they are a foreign element, and their detachment from the setting into which they have been artificially inserted leaves us with an intelligible account of the earlier belief concerning the birth of Jesus Christ.

But if even that earlier belief contains a great deal that can only be described as legendary embellishment—if we conclude that Jesus Christ was born in Nazareth as the eldest child of Joseph the carpenter and Mary his wife, and that the event was accompanied by no supernatural occurrences—we are very far from saying that the legends of the Lord's Nativity are therefore worthless. The discovery of the non-historical character of a narrative does not mean that that narrative is to be ignominiously cast overboard, amid rejoicings that yet another "falsehood" has been victoriously exposed. When we find ourselves face to face with a legend, we have still to understand what it means and how it arose. To trace the origin of these particular stories in detail may be impossible, owing to the scantiness of our data; but, taking them as a whole, and inquiring into their value and meaning as legends, we shall have to assign to them a very high significance, and treat them as first-class material contributory to a true estimate of Jesus Christ.

These narratives embody, in picture-language, precisely the same feeling about our Lord which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expressed in speaking of Him as "the effulgence of God's glory, and the very Image of His substance," and which the Fourth Evangelist expressed when he declared Him to be the Word made flesh. These are only various ways of stating the same truth. So high, so pure, so holy, of such unearthly grandeur and might, did Jesus appear to those who confessed Him as their Saviour, that they had in some way to mark their sense of His elevation above the common plane of humanity. St. Paul does not state it in the same terms as the Fourth Evangelist, nor the latter in the same terms as Matthew and Luke; yet they one and all, each in his own dialect, put into words the same conviction, born of the same consciousness. In reading the accounts of the Lord's miraculous entry into the world, the true question we have to ask is this: *What must have been the quality of a Life to which such an origin was attributed?* As has

been wisely and happily said concerning these narratives—which we would assuredly not miss from our Gospels—" they are trustworthy testimonies, not to the reality of certain incidents, but to the quality and magnitude of Jesus' character; not the history of His birth, but products of the quality of His ministry."

" Mary . . . brought forth her firstborn son; . . . and when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising Him, His name was called JESUS " (Luke ii. 7, 21). The pious legend, of course, will have it that the Child had been " so called by the angel before He was conceived " ; as a matter of fact, the name, an abbreviation of Joshua, " God's-help," so far from being unique, was of fairly common occurrence in later Judaism. Some twenty personages bearing that appellation are mentioned by Josephus, and one of the most famous and valuable of the Old Testament Apocrypha has for its author a Jew of the second century B.C. named Jesus, the son of Sirach.

It still remains for us to inquire into the probable date of the birth of Joseph and Mary's eldest son, Himself the first of a family of five brothers and several sisters (Mark vi. 3). According to Luke iii. 1, 23, Jesus was " about thirty years of age " " in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar," *i.e.* A.D. 28–29; and, according to both Luke i. 5 and Matt. ii. 1, He was born in the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.). Luke's statement that the Lord's birth took place at the time of the census made by Quirinius is certainly erroneous, for, as we have seen, that census was not held until after the deposition of Archelaus, in A.D. 6. If we could be certain of Luke's accuracy in giving the approximate age of Jesus at the time of His first public appearance as about thirty, we should conclude that He had seen the light towards the very end of Herod's reign. The Fourth Evangelist, however, evidently follows a different tradition when he represents the Jews as saying to Jesus, " Thou art not yet fifty years old " (viii. 57); for there can hardly be any merely symbolic intention in the choice of the figure fifty, nor would such a remark have been addressed to a man not much more than half that age. The Fourth Evangelist's statement is puzzling, but cannot be altogether put aside. It is, then, at least possible that our Lord may have been somewhat older than Luke makes Him, and we shall be safe in saying that He was born within the closing phase of the long reign of King Herod, *i.e.*, perhaps between 15 and 4 B.C.

It was by no means an unimportant circumstance that Jesus

was a child of " Galilee of the gentiles " (Matt. iv. 15 ; *cf.* Isa. ix. 1). Near to Syro-Phœnicia and Arabia on the one hand, separated from Judæa proper by the territory of the Samaritans on the other, and brought into continual contact with non-Jewish races, the Galileans could not but escape, at least to some extent, the narrow orthodoxy of which Jerusalem, with its temple, was the centre, nor could they practise the exclusiveness dear to the Pharisees. The question, " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? " (John i. 46), and the saying " Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet " (*ib.* vii. 52), no doubt expressed the southern Jew's habitual contempt for a half-heathen province. Nevertheless, if He was thus relatively unshackled by the fetters of an unspiritual legalism, it must not be imagined that Jesus was anything but a loyal Jew. Fragmentary as our records are, they make it clear that He was intimately at home in the Hebrew Scriptures, using His knowledge of the sacred literature of His nation with ease and brilliant originality, alike in exposition, defence, and attack. How deeply His mind was coloured by contemporary Jewish thought, and how decisively the messianic speculations of the age influenced Him, is clear to anyone who brings to the study of the Gospel some knowledge of that " background " with which recent researches have made us more familiar. Even the parabolic form in which He was to cast so much of His teaching was that of the rabbinic learning of His day, with which He must have been well acquainted as a frequenter of the synagogue ; that He breathed a fresh spirit into the familiar form is a truth which cannot be overstated, but does not alter the fact itself.

It may be readily surmised that the house of Jesus, where He learned His father's trade (Mark vi. 3), was deeply religious, and informed by that heartfelt, unofficial piety which flourished side by side with the more formal creed and observances of the law, among " the quiet in the land " (Ps. xxxv. 20). But if the growing youth studied the ancient deliverance of God in His written Word, it is no less certain that He studied the Book of Nature, and that He did so lovingly. Nazareth, on whose site there stands to-day the pleasant little town of En-Nasira, was situated in a high valley in Lower Galilee, a little away from the great main roads along which caravans and armies were wont to pass, yet within easy hail of their traffic. The town was built at the foot and on the slope of the hill (Luke iv. 29), amid surroundings charming to the eye ; then, as now, the district was rich in vineyards and fruitful fields, gardens and palm- and

olive-groves. " On climbing on the north-west side of the broad valley of Nazareth," we read, " some hundred feet above the rows of houses to the summit of the height, a magnificent view unfolds itself. To the west one's gaze sweeps over the low mountain spurs to the Mediterranean and the bold promontory of Mount Carmel. Southward lies the broad plain of Jezreel, resembling a green lake girt with mountains. On the east rises the dome of Tabor, clothed with young trees ; and at its foot, two hours' journey from Nazareth, the old caravan road winds towards Damascus. Towards the north, above the pleasant plain El-Battauf, rises the fine range of upper Galilean mountains, and, towering above them all, Hermon, looking like a king enthroned on the horizon. From Hermon to the mountains of Samaria, from the blue sea to the high mountain summits of Gilead, we have a vast panorama." [1]

That these surroundings affected Jesus profoundly, that He lived in intimate communion with nature, is plain from numberless allusions in His utterances ; and as He was at home with nature in her solitary aspects, so He was familiar with the life of the fields and its operations. Lastly, Jesus was acquainted with the world of men as much as with the world of nature ; He delighted in the society of His kind, sharing the experiences of everyday humanity, understanding the joys and sorrows of ordinary people, and was for that very reason able to appeal to them in a manner quite unlike that of the learned scribes, because of His close touch with those whom the Pharisees despised as ignorant, and therefore accursed (John vii. 49).

Of His growth and development we know next to nothing. But that nothing is better than the grotesque tales concerning His childhood which we find in some of the spurious Gospels—clumsy inventions, some of which show Him, unintentionally, in an anything but amiable light, a most unchildlike child. The one episode of those years preserved by Luke (chap. ii. 41–50), concerning a Passover visit to Jerusalem and His adventure in the temple, may well rest on fact, even though it is not likely that His parents would have proceeded three days' march on their homeward journey before they missed Him, and though the form of His answer to Mary's reproach was probably something much simpler and more boyish than " Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house ? " But that a lad of unusual mental gifts, and already conscious of vague aspirations which He could not

[1] Neumann, *Jesus*, p. 15.

yet reduce to shape or interpret, took the opportunity of engaging in conversation with some of the learned men in the temple ; that His intelligent questions and answers impressed them considerably ; and that in His interest in the discussion He forgot all about joining the caravan at the time fixed for departure, and had to be fetched by His mother—all this is credible enough.

But of far greater significance than Luke's anecdote was an event which fell in the Lord's early life—indeed, in all probability in its most impressionable period, the years of quickly-ripening faculties—an occurrence which must have left a deep mark on His mind. That event was the direct outcome of that census of Quirinius which Luke mistakenly connects with the birth of Jesus, but which did not take place until after the removal of Archelaus. True, it embraced only Judæa and Samaria, and not Galilee, which was under the rule of Antipas, but the revolt which is provoked was headed by Judas of Galilee, a native of the " strong, splenetic north " (Acts v. 37). The fires of the rebellion were extinguished in blood ; but while the conflagration lasted it burned very fiercely, and even in quiet Nazareth the flames and smoke must have been visible. Though this rising was not messianic in character, it could not but intensify those longings for the promised national Emancipator which played so great a part in contemporary Jewish life ; for the census was the outward expression of the hated Roman domination, and for loyal—or fanatical—Jews its payment was an act of apostasy from God (Mark xii. 14–17). Nothing was so well calculated to rekindle the zeal even of the lukewarm, and to make pious folk everywhere pray with increased fervour for " the consolation of Israel " (Luke ii. 25), *i.e.* the coming of Messiah. It may well have been the recollection of this ineffectual rebellion, and the pitiful fate of those who took part in it, which caused our Lord in later years to view with distrust that military conception of the Messiahship which for most of His countrymen was the only one.

But that is conjecture ; what we know is that Jesus " advanced in wisdom and stature " (Luke ii. 52), passing, *i.e.* through all the normal stages of development, a natural, healthy, well-balanced youth ; and with this physical and mental unfolding there went on an increase of the quality which the Gospel, with a reminiscence of the childhood of Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 26), calls " favour with God and man "—the quality which we may render by " grace " or " charm." Doubtless He paid some subsequent visits to Jerusalem, learning something more of the methods and

arguments of the scribes, but admiring them somewhat less than on that first memorable occasion ; but in the main His life was passed in friendly Galilee, close to the heart of nature and mankind, in work, in prayer, in thought, without a premonition of the future in store for Him.

As He grew older, He would become more and more intimately acquainted with the hopes and expectations that were astir all around Him ; He would almost certainly read some of the apocalyptic writings which were the special literary feature of His day, and some of which were the product of the Galilean soil—books which spoke darkly, yet in burning accents, of the close-impending end of the age, the redemption of Israel, and the coming of the Son of man who would execute judgment and then commence His glorious reign—and He, too, would fervently look forward to such a happy consummation. But that He Himself was to play a part in those tremendous happenings He did not anticipate, and across the homely labours by which He earned His daily bread there fell no shadow of the Cross.

Thus, as the years went by, He drew serene and tranquil breaths, and His soul rounded itself to perfect fullness in that secluded valley, until the hour when, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the Eternal, there should go forth out of Nazareth He who was to be the Christ of God.

But that hour was not yet.

CHAPTER II

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN

THE scene of our narrative now shifts from Galilee to Judæa.

The times, as we have seen, were evil in the Palestine of the first generation of our era. The detested Roman yoke rested heavily upon the Jewish people, for even those parts of the country which were not directly under the Imperial administration were held by princelings who enjoyed the semblance of independence at Rome's pleasure. It has been pointed out that the Jewish nation had had previous experience of even worse foreign despotisms, such as that of Antiochus Epiphanes, which had caused the rising of the Maccabees, and that even Herod the Great had exercised a more arbitrary rule over his subjects than the Imperial power, which in principle extended to the Jewish religion a toleration born of indifference. If none the less it seemed to the Jews that the situation had never been so hopeless, it was because the fetters were felt to be far more tightly riveted than ever before: from previous tyrannies they had escaped again and again, but from the domination of Rome, with its universal sway, there appeared, humanly speaking, no rescue possible. They might have quoted the ancient prophet's complaint, "Ah, Lord God! surely Thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul" (Jer. iv. 10). But just because deliverance by natural means seemed so impossible, the people clung the more tenaciously to the hope of a supernatural deliverance. God *could* not have forsaken Israel, and the very intensity of the nation's sufferings was the guarantee of His nearness. Precisely because the kingdom of Satan appeared to be in its zenith, the kingdom of God must be at the doors.

Since the deposition of Archelaus, Judæa had been governed by a succession of procurators, of whom Pontius Pilate was the fifth in number. His record shows this official to have been headstrong, tactless and unsympathetic; at the same time it will be well to remember that our knowledge of him is exclusively derived from hostile sources, and the fact that it was he

who sentenced Jesus to death has doubtless inspired additional prejudice against his character and methods. Philo, it is true, tells us (*Leg. ad Caium.* 38) that Agrippa I, in writing to Caligula, described Pilate as "inflexible, merciless, and obstinate," and guilty of "corruption, violence, robbery, ill-usage, oppression, illegal executions, and never-ending most grievous cruelty"—in short, as a master-criminal, without a redeeming feature; but such a picture hardly accords with Pilate's unusually prolonged tenure of office, which rather points to a measure of success achieved under constant difficulties. The representative of a system which was bitterly resented by the Jews, because it was foreign and pagan, could not himself be popular; and it must be borne in mind that the population was ever on the look-out for causes of offence, demanding from their rulers respect for scruples which to the authorities appeared absurd. The country was in a perturbed and disaffected state, and fanatical outbreaks, religious and political, were always to be apprehended. It was no sinecure to be governor of Judæa, to keep the peace between Jews and Samaritans, steer a tolerably clear course amid the mazes of Oriental intrigue, keep priests and plotters in their places, and overawe without provoking to disloyalty petty princes like the tetrarchs to east and west of Jordan. No one could have fulfilled such functions to the satisfaction of all and sundry, nor would any concessions—had it been in the nature of Pilate to make such—have overcome the settled animosity of a people determined to be contented with nothing less than the downfall of Rome and the restoration of their national independence.

The fiercer the popular resentment which was felt towards the foreign government—a resentment of which Pilate could not be unaware, but which he probably despised—the more intense was the ardour with which men cherished their hopes in the coming of God's Messiah, conceived, as we already know, as a man of war, and not as a prince of peace, a conqueror and emancipator: it was in this expectation that men prayed, "Thy kingdom come," and to declare the kingdom at hand was to be sure of an eager audience, asking breathlessly, "When shall these things be?" To this question, indeed, there was a preliminary answer: the coming of Messiah would be heralded by a forerunner, who should accredit himself by wondrous works, accompanied by vast natural catastrophes. Had not Malachi, the last of the prophets, said, "Behold, I send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come" (Mal. iv. 5)? Was it not this

same Elijah of whom Malachi spoke in the words, " Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me " ? (*ib.* iii. 1). And with these passages there was currently combined another oracle from the prophet Joel (ii. 28 ff.) : " And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. . . . And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." *When therefore we speak of the intense expectancy—the messianic expectancy—which reigned in the days preceding the appearance of our Lord, we do not in the first place mean, paradoxical as it sounds, that men were looking for the Messiah so much as for Elijah ; for it was an understood axiom that " Elijah must first come "* (Mark ix. 11).

The most fantastic calculations were habitually indulged in to ascertain the time when the clock of history should strike the decisive hour—the end of the present age, the beginning of that which was to come ; but to Jesus, while no doubt He shared most of the apocalyptic ideas of His day, these chronological puzzles were altogether repugnant, and He was content with the grandly simple declaration, " Of that day and that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father " (Mark xiii. 32). That the consummation was at hand, would be realized within the lifetime of His hearers, He was convinced (Mark ix. 1 ; Matt. x. 23).

" Now in the fifteenth reign of Tiberius Cæsar," Luke informs us (iii. 1, 2), " Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the regions of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Luke is very precise, but in his endeavour to show the exactitude of his knowledge of the time when the curtain rose on the prelude to the greatest of all dramas in human history, he is betrayed into two unimportant errors. For Lysanias was not tetrarch of Abilene at that time, but had been executed in 36 B.C., and the Evangelist apparently takes this particular from a careless reading of Josephus (*Antt.* xx. 7. 138) ; and Annas and Caiaphas were not, and could not be, high-priests simultaneously, but Annas having been deposed by Pilate's predecessor, contrived to have his five sons successively installed in the high-priestly office. (*Cf.* John xviii. 13–24 ; Acts iv. 6). But, these details

apart, the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign ran from August 19th, A.D. 28–29; thus it was in that year that we must place the beginning of what proved a new epoch in the history of the world, the preaching and baptizing activity of John. Jesus Himself dated the new era from that event, contrasting what happened "until John" with what followed "from the days of John the Baptist until now" (Matt. xi. 12, 13). Who, then, was this personage, of whom Jesus could say that "among them that are born of women there had not arisen a greater" (*ib.* 11)—the preacher whose influence, so far from ending with his death, was found to persist some twenty years later, when St. Paul, on coming to Ephesus, found there about twelve disciples who knew only the baptism of John? (Acts xix. 1–7).

Luke alone among our Evangelists presents us with a detailed narrative of John's nativity (i. 5–25), a story modelled on Old Testament prototypes of famous and wonderful births. There is a righteous but childless and already aged couple, Zacharias the priest and Elisabeth his wife, to whom a child is promised by an angel of the Lord, just as a similar promise is made to the aged Abraham and Sarah (Gen. xvii. 15–22; *ib.* xviii. 9–15). Like Abraham, Zacharias meets the Divine promise with incredulity, and is punished by temporary dumbness. Elisabeth's son, like Hannah's, is born after years of unfulfilled longing (1 Sam. i. and ii.), and as Hannah bursts forth into a psalm of praise and thanksgiving after her prayers have been granted, so does Zacharias.[1] Finally, if the angel of the Lord directs that John is to "drink no wine nor strong drink" (Luke i. 15), the same instructions had been given to Samson's mother (Judges xiii. 4). Such a marked literary dependence would be sufficient to raise strong *prima facie* doubts as to the historical character of any narrative; but even apart from this, Luke's wonder-tale of angelic apparitions, childbirth in old age, *ex tempore* lyrical outbursts, etc., belongs quite evidently to the region of religious poetry, and not of fact. The hymn ascribed to Zacharias is in form and substance a messianic psalm, expressing the hope of Israel's liberation from the hands of its enemies by a descendant of David. Luke alone tells us also that Elisabeth, John's mother, was a kinswoman of Mary's, and of the encounter of the two women before their children were born (i. 39–46); this alleged relationship, however, is directly repudiated by the Fourth Evangelist, according to whom Jesus was evidently a stranger to John at the time of His baptism (*cf.* John i. 33, "And I knew

[1] *Cf.* also Mary's hymn of praise, Luke i. 46–55.

him not "). The names of John's parents, as given by Luke, may rest on actual recollection, and another probable detail is that he abstained from strong drink (*cf.* Luke vii. 33) ; but the remainder of the story is an example of that *haggada*, or fanciful religious narrative, in which later Judaism delighted. What it bears witness to is the deep impression made on his contemporaries by John the Baptist, whose birth, like that of other great men of antiquity, must have been marvellously foretold, and marvellously accomplished.

So far as history is concerned, we step on to firm ground only when we reach that world-historic fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when John's call went forth (Mark i. 2–8 ; Matt. iii. 1–12 ; Luke iii. 1–18) announcing the Kingdom to be imminent and summoning all to prepare themselves for that close-impending event by the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. It is from the glimpses we catch of him by Jordan's shore, and not from the comments made by the Evangelists at a time when the belief of Christians had become general that the Baptist was the promised forerunner of the Messiah, that we shall have to answer the question what manner of man this was, and what the multitudes " went out for to see " (Matt. xi. 8). So much is certain—Mark is correct when he says that *this* was " the beginning of the Gospel," viz. when " John came, who baptized in the wilderness " (Mark i. 1, 4). On the other hand, in the intermediate verses " Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send a messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way ; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," we are not dealing with history but with the Evangelist's comment, with an attempt, made in entire good faith, to show that John was indeed the expected Elijah who was to usher in the messianic period. It is of minor importance that the words, " Behold my messenger, etc," were not written by Isaiah, but by Malachi, iii. 1 ; while the second half of Mark's quotation, " The voice of one crying in the wilderness, etc.," is inexactly adapted from Isa. xl. 3, where it refers, not to the Messiah, but to Yahveh leading His people back from exile through the desert into their own country.

John appears, a hermit, clad in a prophet's robe of camel's-hair (*cf.* Zech. xiii. 4), an ascetic subsisting on dried locusts and wild honey, on his lips the very proclamation for which men were eagerly waiting : salvation was drawing nigh, and judgment also —let men face the issue which was no longer to be put off. As

for the *locale* of his preaching, Mark says that it was "in the wilderness" (i. 4), while Matthew still more definitely states, "in the wilderness of Judæa" (iii. 1); but as the river Jordan does not flow through, nor touches, the desert, Luke is probably more accurate when he tells us that John "came into all the country about Jordan" (iii. 3) representing him, *i.e.*, as an itinerant preacher, who exercised his calling by the shores—on either side—of the sacred river, in which he immersed his converts. His message, then, in the first place, was eschatological, in the sense that it vigorously proclaimed the nearness of the end of this age, and the catastrophic appearance of the Kingdom of God; it is noticeable that, like many of his predecessors, while he announces the Kingdom, he is not reported as having explicitly, by using either the term or its current equivalents, alluded to the coming of the *Messiah*—a circumstance we shall have to explain later on.

But in the second place, the Baptist's preaching was not *merely* eschatological, but fiercely and insistently ethical (Luke iii. 7–14)—he calls men to *repentance* in view of the great impending event, which is described as so close that "even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees." This was an unaccustomed point of view, and went in the very teeth of that national arrogance which was only too apt to imagine, in forgetfulness of the prophet's teaching, that the judgment which would certainly accompany the day of the Lord, "that great and terrible day," would be meted out exclusively to the heathen, while the children of Abraham would be exempt simply in virtue of their descent. In his eschatology, John merely reproduced the current ideas of his age and country; in his strong ethical sense he went back to the classical prophetic tradition. Let not his hearers imagine, he exclaims, that the judgment is not meant for them, because they have Abraham to their father; God could raise children unto Abraham of the very stones that were lying about—a foreshadowing of that doctrine of the Israel of God which might be quite other than the Israel according to the flesh. Had not Yahveh of old threatened the disobedient nation that He would say to them which were not His people, "Thou art my people"? (Hos. ii. 23, *cf.* Rom. ix. 25). Let them therefore repent of their sins while it was time, and as a symbol of inner cleansing be immersed in the flowing river, thereby securing that Divine pardon—that "remission" of punishment due—which God would grant to those who should prove the sincerity of their contrition by bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance.

There can be no doubt as to the tremendous stir caused by John's preaching, which, while in its insistence on the kingdom of God it struck a familiar chord, struck it with a difference; it seemed as if one of the great prophets of old had come to life again, as if another Amos had arisen to denounce wickedness and scourge the vices of the age. We learn from Luke of the injunctions given by the Baptist to the different types and classes of people who asked him what they must do in view of the coming judgment: the well-to-do were to exercise brotherly sympathy toward the needy, the tax-gatherers were to abstain from extortion, the soldiers—probably the mercenaries of Herod Antipas—to refrain from violence, and not to add to their wages by exactions from the hard-pressed civil population. That he attracted great crowds and produced a profound impression, his fame spreading even to the north, is certain, even if we make allowance for a certain amount of exaggeration in Mark's statement that "there went out to him *all* the country of Judæa, and *all* they of Jerusalem" (i. 5). Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees, though perhaps hardly, as Matthew states, "many" (iii. 7), may have gone to witness this new phenomenon on the banks of the Jordan; according to Luke (iii. 7), it was not to them, but to the multitudes that he addressed those stinging words, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"—a bitterly mocking and scornful question, which, however, was well in keeping with John's austere, uncompromising character.

As for the rite of baptism, immersion of the whole body in cold water, preferably in a running brook or stream, was practised by the Jews as a means of purification from ritual uncleanness. The zeal of the Pharisees in the matter of frequent washings for ceremonial reasons is referred to in Mark vii. 1 ff., and the Essenes laid great weight on the value of thorough ablutions. As an obvious symbol of repentance—the desire for inner cleansing—such a rite would appeal to every Jew who recited the imploring words of Psalm li., "Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and purge me from my sin," or who remembered Yahveh's remonstrance to His people in Isa. i. 16, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." It was his insistence on immersion in token of repentance which earned John the cognomen of "the Baptizer."

Notwithstanding the violent invectives with which the great desert preacher, according to Luke, received the multitudes, it would be a mistake to look upon the people who flocked to John's

baptism as specially corrupt or sunk in iniquity ; the very fact that they responded so readily to his call—though their motive may have been partly fear—seems to prove the contrary. They were an ill-used, oppressed and febrile rather than a morally reprobate populace, whose worst defects were due to a mechanical conception of religion, together with an overgrown racial conceit—both the product of the teaching of scribes and Pharisees ; St. Paul stated the exact truth when he bore his countrymen witness that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. x. 2). It is the prerogative of prophets to produce conviction of sin among their hearers by strenuously deepening their greys into blacks, and the Baptist in this respect simply conformed to the old-established custom of his predecessors.

But while John undoubtedly denounced the sins of the people and urged them to repent in view of the approaching Judgment, it is quite unlikely that he directed his invective especially against the marriage of Antipas to Herodias, or that it was his denunciations of that marriage which hastened his end. Indeed, the whole romantic story of the circumstances attending the Baptist's death (Mark vi. 17–29 ; Matt. xiv. 3–12) is open to the gravest doubts, being, among other circumstances, palpably modelled on well-known Old Testament stories of kings and queens.

Herodias was the niece of Antipas, the daughter of his brother Aristobulus ; she had also been the wife of another of his brothers —not, as Mark and Matthew state, of Philip, who married her daughter Salome, but of Boëthus, who lived privately in Rome or Jerusalem. In marrying his brother's divorced wife, the tetrarch was held to infringe the provisions of Lev. xviii. 16, and doubtless gave offence to contemporary Jewish opinion ; what is less certain is that John, with the well-defined objects of his preaching, would have paid special attention to the matrimonial affairs of a semi-heathen prince. Josephus, in recording the imprisonment and execution of John, attributes Herod's action to political motives, but makes no mention of the Baptist's alleged protests against the tetrarch's marriage to Herodias, still less of the melodramatic story of Herodias' revenge ; Luke accordingly, who had certainly read and consulted Josephus on the secular events contemporary with those of the Gospel, omits the whole detailed narrative he found ready to his hand in Mark's pages.

That narrative, as we said, is modelled on Old Testament prototypes. The fatal vow by which Antipas binds himself to put John to death is a common *motif* of saga, and has its parallel

in the story of Jephtha (Judges xi.). If John was the new Elijah, Herodias was the new Jezebel, with her bitter hatred and persecution of the prophet of the Lord. If Salome—who, incidentally, so far from being a little girl (κοράσιον) at the time, was probably already married to Philip—is represented as dancing at a banquet given by Herod to his lords and captains and chiefs, we remember just such a banquet given by King Ahasuerus (Esther i. 3), and how, when his heart was merry with wine he commanded Vashti the queen to appear before his boon-companions to display her beauty. If Antipas promises to give to Salome whatsoever she should ask, unto the half of his kingdom, that is yet another reminiscence from Esther v. 3, 6 ; vii. 2 ; only Antipas had not a " kingdom," and was unable to dispose of his territories, which he held from the Emperor

To complete the list of improbabilities, John was a prisoner at Machærus, four days' journey from Tiberias, where alone a State banquet would have been held, so that his head could not have been brought back there and then ; for the same reason, if for no other, it is quite unlikely that the tetrarch, who resided ordinarily in his Galilean capital, held personal intercourse with his prisoner, while we have no reason for thinking that he regarded him with veneration, and " kept him safe " from the evil intentions of Herodias.

As for the latter, it has to be said that our knowledge of her, whatever her other frailties, does not at all bear out the portrait drawn of her by romantic legend on the model of Ahab's queen. Her affection for Antipas at any rate was genuine and steadfast, and stood the test of adversity ; for when in A.D. 37 her husband was deposed and exiled by Caligula, she declined the exemption which was offered her, and went to share his banishment and obscurity in far-off Gaul.

The truth is that, quite apart from the Baptist's alleged protest against his marriage, Herod Antipas had sufficient political reasons to desire the silencing of this preacher. If the Roman governor did not understand the drift of this agitation, he, Herod, knew well enough that to proclaim this " coming kingdom " was to unsettle the minds of the people, and to prepare ugly possibilities of insurrection, which the Roman world-power would no doubt survive, but which toy-thrones like his might not. We shall accordingly be inclined to accept the statement of Josephus, who tells us (*Antt.* xviii.) that Herod regarded John as a dangerous demagogue, and had him arrested and

executed at Machærus from political motives. For to allow John's preaching to continue without let or hindrance was simply to invite trouble; and we can imagine that, as soon as the situation was reported to him, the wily tetrarch—"that fox," as Jesus called him (Luke xiii. 32)—gave orders, the moment the Baptist appeared in *his* territories, east of Jordan, to have him laid by the heels; such violent agitators must not go free. Mere fanatic though he might be from Herod's point of view, the people regarded him as a prophet (Mark xi. 32); and when he told them of that greater one who should come after him, the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose—who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost, whose winnowing-fan was in his hand, and who would gather the wheat into his garner, but would turn the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mark i. 7, 8; Matt. iii. 11, 12; Luke iii. 16, 17)—why, a spark from this inflammatory talk might set any amount of highly combustible material ablaze. Unquestionably, as a matter of statecraft, Herod was well advised in having John removed; only, the step came too late to prevent consequences infinitely more momentous than the tetrarch could conceive.

But who, then, was this mysterious greater one whom John announced? Must it not have been the Messiah; was not the hint too plain to be misunderstood; and did it not prove beyond a doubt that the Baptist accepted, nay, claimed for himself the *rôle* of the forerunner, the Elijah? That, of course, is the view which the Evangelists themselves held, and which they have succeeded in stamping upon the Gospel story; it is nevertheless one which we cannot allow to pass unchallenged. We have already seen that the personage to whose appearance popular expectation immediately pointed was not the Messiah, but the Elijah, who "must first come" (Mark ix. 11; Matt. xvii. 10). Now it is not a little remarkable that if John conceived himself to be that forerunner, he should never have referred to himself as the Elijah; nor, if he was understood to have that character, could Peter, James, and John, at a much later date, have urged that Elijah must first come, or any section of the people, many months after, have thought Jesus to be Elijah (Mark viii. 28; Matt. xvi. 14; Luke ix. 19; *cf.* Mark vi. 16). Evidently the Lord's most intimate disciples did not identify the Baptist with Elijah. Again, it is strange that John is never reported as designating the one who was to come after him by any such well-known messianic titles as the Son of David

or the Son of man. Moreover, the description he gives of his mighty successor does not fit the Messiah at all, and could not be understood by his hearers as having reference to that personage; certainly the description of one wielding a winnowing-fan and bringing fire from heaven did not fit Jesus.

Whom did it fit? Let us see. The day of the Lord, the advent of the kingdom, was, as already stated, to be signalized by all manner of supernatural signs and tokens, accompanied by an outpouring of the spirit—in other words, baptism with the Holy Ghost. These events were to coincide with the appearance of Elijah, and no such events had accompanied the preaching of John, who therefore *could not* think himself, nor be thought by others, to be the old prophet. The mighty one, accordingly, to whose coming John pointed, and to whom his description applies, is not Messiah but Elijah—it is the forerunner whom he proclaims as nigh, who should work signs and wonders, and effect the outpouring of the spirit upon the people, *i.e.* baptize them with the Holy Ghost. In the absence of such signs John could not have been invested by the people with the function of the forerunner; *the only one who definitely identified the preacher of repentance on the shores of Jordan with the mighty Old Testament prophet who was to open the messianic era was—Jesus* (Mark ix. 13; Matt. xi. 10, Luke vii. 27). The reason for this identification will become apparent at a subsequent stage; for the moment, we would draw attention to a very remarkable piece of evidence presented by a quite incidental statement of the Fourth Evangelist, which seems to rest on a separate and genuine tradition. "And this is the witness of John," we read, "when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem . . . to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed . . . I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? *Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not*" (John i. 19–21). Why should the Fourth Evangelist—admitting that he does frequently alter facts when it suits his purpose to do so—have placed this emphatic denial on the Baptist's lips, except for the reason that it represents a scrap of genuine recollection? In effect, as we have shown, John could not have made the claim to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and it is likely enough that, on some occasion or other, he explicitly repudiated that *rôle*. He, like the men of his age, was himself looking for Elijah who was to come; but he himself had no idea of being that personage, neither did he profess to exercise the office of the messenger who should prepare the way for the Lord's Christ.

Nevertheless it was ordained that this should be his place in history, though not intended or imagined by himself; for that place was assigned to him, not of his own choice, but by the masterful act[1] of that Greater One whom he expected yet did not know (*cf.* John i. 31) when he beheld Him face to face, as he was presently to do.

For already, whilst John "the Baptizer" is standing by the holy stream, pouring forth passionate hope, invective, appeal, remonstrance, glowing vision of judgment and redemption, there moves from the north, from Galilee of the gentiles, a caravan of pilgrims drawn by the spreading fame of the new prophet; and among their number—little dreaming that He is approaching the turning-point of His life, nay, of human history—an obscure, God-fearing young mechanic, Jesus of Nazareth.

[1] See chap. viii., pp. 133 ff.

CHAPTER III

THE THRESHOLD OF THE GATE

We have seen that the prevailing temper of Judaism at the opening of our era was one of ardent longing for the Kingdom of God, which was the more surely expected in view of the very hopelessness of the outlook apart from such a supernatural intervention; the darkness of the hour was eagerly interpreted as predicting the dawn. The popular mind presented a mass of highly inflammable material; into this mass, ready to take fire from any spark, there fell like lightning the proclamation of the Baptist, "The Kingdom of God is at hand, at the very doors; repent, and be baptized in token of repentance!" Straightway men's hearts kindled in response throughout that tormented, restless country, and not least in Galilee. It would have been strange if a profoundly religious spirit like that of Jesus had not been deeply influenced by the eschatological hopes of His time—hopes which pointed to the end of the present evil age, and the inauguration of the Divine reign, when sorrow and sighing should flee away. Like every pious son of Israel, He must have looked forward to the Day of the Lord, when God's everlasting Kingdom should be established by His chosen and anointed servant, for whose advent every day this petition went up in the *Sh'mone-Esre*, the prayer of all devout Jews: "Let the shoot of David Thy servant come up soon, and may he lift up his horn by Thy salvation. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who raisest up a horn of salvation." (*Cf.* Luke i. 69, "And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.") It was, then, the most natural thing in the world that Jesus, like so many others who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel," as it was pathetically called, should have felt the imperious need of seeing and hearing the Baptist for Himself.

Nothing could be simpler or more unconstrained than Mark's statement (i. 9), "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan." Mark saw nothing in the fact of this baptism to

scruple at, nor did Luke, who relates (iii. 21) that " when all the people were baptized, Jesus also " underwent the rite. Not so, however, Matthew, nor John, who, being more theologically minded, stumble over the circumstance of the sinless Saviour, the Word made flesh, submitting to—nay, applying for—" the baptism of repentance for remission of sins " (Luke iii. 3). The Fourth Evangelist, in relating this episode (John i. 29–34), while he plainly uses the material supplied to him by his predecessors, so arranges it as to leave unmentioned the essential fact of Jesus being baptized by John. Matthew's (iii. 13–17) is a different method ; he too feels that there is an element of the incongruous in what tradition averred to have taken place, and is certain that the Baptist himself must have been conscious of this incongruity. He therefore represents John as supernaturally recognizing the Lord's messianic dignity—a feature further developed by the Fourth Evangelist—and shrinking from the administration of the rite to such a One : " I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? " Having made his protest, he yields to the persuasion of Jesus to " suffer it " for the present ; " for thus," Jesus is made to say by way of explanation, " it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," *i.e.*, to comply with a prescribed formality. Obviously it was only the reverence of a later generation which postulated this reluctance on the Baptist's part, or credited him with the instant recognition of Jesus as the Messiah ; the Christian community could not understand the Sinless One undergoing a baptism of repentance.

We have yet another indication of the same feeling in a fragment from the Gospel of the Hebrews, where we read : " Behold, His mother and His brethren said unto Him, John the Baptist baptizeth for the remission of sins ; let us go and be baptized of him. But He said unto them, What sin have I committed, that I should be baptized of him ? Unless this very thing that I am saying is (an act of) ignorance,"[1] *i.e.*, a sin of omission due to ignorance, which, according to Lev. v. 17, counts the same as wilful guilt. This is merely another, and not too skilful, attempt to reconcile the historical incident with the doctrinal standpoint of the early Church. It is easy to see, however, that such an explanation could not commend itself to Christian sentiment, which would neither be satisfied with a quasi-confession of unconscious failure on the part of the Lord, nor relish the suggestion that when He took the decisive step of His life He did not

[1] Jerome, *Contra Pelag.* iii. 2.

act on His own initiative, but yielded to the persuasions of His family.[1]

The difficulty which Matthew and the Gospel of the Hebrews attempt to meet vanishes, however, if we see in the act of Jesus—as we legitimately may—only the symbol of a solemn determination on the part of a supremely pure character to fight sin with an unceasing watchfulness and the exertion of all His power. Moreover, the Aramaic word which John would use, and which we translate by "repentance," meant literally a turning round, a sharp change of direction, and at such a turning-point Jesus had quite unquestionably arrived, as His whole subsequent career showed. The baptism which He received at the hands of John marked a turning-point for Him, immeasurably more than the same rite did for the multitudes that flocked day after day to the banks of Jordan. Many of them, no doubt, emerged from its floods resolved to walk henceforth in holier ways, and so to await the coming of the Messiah; but He with the new, strange, all-transforming, incommunicable consciousness of being in a unique manner the Son of God.

For now we must turn from that which plenty of individuals were in a position to attest as eye-witnesses—the baptism of Jesus as an outward event—to what must rest in the last resort exclusively on His own testimony, viz. His inner baptismal experience. To disentangle this with any completeness from the form under which it is presented to us in the Gospels (Mark i. 10, 11; Matt. iii. 16, 17; Luke iii. 21*b*, 22) may be impossible, for, of all kinds of genius, spiritual genius may be most fitly described as "a mighty deep, beyond all fathom-line"; nevertheless, the attempt must be made, in all reverence, to penetrate into the consciousness of the Master.

It was the belief of the primitive Church concerning Jesus of Nazareth that "after the baptism which John preached . . . God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38). This, too, is the view presented by the Synoptists, who declare that, as Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon (or, Mark i. 10, *into*) Him, and a heavenly voice declared Him to be the Son of God, Now according to Mark, whose account is the simplest of the three, it was Jesus Himself who, as He arose from immersion, saw the heavens

[1] *Cf.* John vii. 2–8, where Jesus declines His brethren's suggestion to go up to the feast, and bids them go without Him.

rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending. Such a description is compatible with a vision seen *by Jesus*, and by Him only, and related by Him on a subsequent occasion. The same interpretation may be placed upon the statement that "a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son" (Ps. ii. 7); "in thee I am well pleased" (Isa. xlii. 1); that is to say, we may here be dealing with an account of the Lord's inner experience. When we turn to Matthew, however, we are told that "the heavens were opened," *i.e.*, as an objective fact (the words "unto him" being omitted by Westcott and Hort), and the further statement runs, "And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, *This is* my beloved Son, *in whom* I am well pleased"—*i.e.*, a public proclamation of Jesus' Messiahship. In Luke, finally, it is affirmed that "the Holy Spirit descended *in a bodily form*, as a dove, upon Him," so that all the spectators were afforded a visible and unmistakable sign of His supernatural election.

Now, quite apart from any question of the miraculous—the Spirit appearing in bodily form, an actual voice from heaven uttering human speech—the account given by Matthew and Luke carries its own refutation. For it is not conceivable that Jesus could ever have met with unbelief and opposition if His messianic dignity had been thus visibly and audibly attested at the very outset of His career before a large concourse of people, who would ever after have borne witness to what they had seen and heard; had such a manifestation been given, it suffers no doubt that the people—already strung up to a high pitch of religious expectancy—would have jubilantly acclaimed Jesus as the appointed deliverer of His nation, "who should redeem Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21) and establish "the kingdom of their father David" (Mark xi. 10). That no such events followed proves conclusively that there were no supernatural signs of which the multitudes could have taken cognizance, but that whatever occurred took place in the inner consciousness of the Lord. It will still be the most probable conclusion that He Himself related to His disciples—possibly to Peter, Mark's informant—that as He arose from the waters of Jordan He had an ecstatic vision as of the heavens opening—which is obviously picture-language—while in the chambers of His heart there echoed an assurance of intimate union with God which could not but clothe itself in some well-remembered Scripture phrase, such as the Psalmist's, "Thou art My Son;

this day have I begotten Thee" (so quoted in Luke iii. 22, according to D.).[1]

But what we have now to ask is the meaning, so far as we can hope to ascertain it, of His baptismal experience *to Jesus Himself*; for that experience determined the whole of His subsequent career. Concluding, as we do, that it belonged to the world of spirit and not of sense, we have to inquire into its significance to *Him*. Was the hour of His baptism the birth-hour of His messianic consciousness? Was He thenceforth completely enlightened as to the course He would have to pursue as to His own mission and destination? Did He rise from Jordan waters knowing Himself the Christ? We find it impossible to answer these questions in the affirmative. To begin with, it was, as we have seen, an axiom of current eschatology that "Elijah must first come" (Mark ix. 11; *cf.* Mal. iv. 5), and the Baptist neither had, nor could he have, claimed to be Elijah; but, secondly, what is even more important, the popular picture of the Messiah was a blend of the descendant of David, who should drive out the foreigner and revive the Hebrew monarchy, and of the Son of man, a heavenly, pre-existent Being, who should "come with the clouds of heaven" (Dan. vii. 13). It seems psychologically impossible that one who had lived the life of an obscure Galilean artisan, and who but a week previously had executed humble commissions in His native province, should have there and then identified Himself with that dazzling and glorious figure, the expectation of all the nation, foretold by so many of His nation's seers. On the other hand, we can well understand the tendency among His early followers to interpret the outpouring of, or anointing by, the Holy Spirit in the light of such Old Testament narratives as the anointing of Saul (1 Sam. x. 1) and especially of David (1 Sam xvi. 13), where we read that "the

[1] A very curious variant of the tradition is that which we have in one version of the Gospel of the Hebrews, where we read: "When the Lord went up out of the water, the whole fountain of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Him, and said unto Him, My Son, I looked for Thee in all the prophets, that Thou mightest come, and that I might rest upon Thee. For Thou art My rest, Thou art My first-begotton Son, who shalt reign throughout eternity." This is quite a different conception from that of the Synoptists of the bestowal of Divine Sonship upon Jesus, in whom at length, after many searches, the Holy Spirit finds His fit and perfect dwelling-place; it has this, however, in common with the Synoptic tradition, that according to it the Lord's investiture with the Holy Spirit is not the result of a supernatural act of generation, but takes place at His baptism. There were a number of diverse conceptions in the early Church as to how and when Jesus became the Son of God. Thus, while in the Nativity stories, which are late additions to Matthew and Luke, He is such from His birth, and while all three Synoptists connect His Divine Sonship with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him at baptism, the earliest of our New Testament writers, St. Paul, says (Rom. i. 4) that Jesus was "declared the Son of God . . . by the resurrection of the dead"—*i.e.* not until He triumphed over the grave was He installed in His full dignity.

Spirit of Yahveh came mightily upon David from that day forward." And if Jesus, though now the Lord's Anointed, remained for a while unrecognized, to all appearance a private individual, the same was true of Saul and David, neither of whom ascended the throne till an interval had elapsed.

As we pass from Mark's story of the baptism to Matthew's and Luke's versions, we can trace the growth of legend; but to deny that Jesus, at the moment of undergoing the rite, had a vision which decisively affected Him, appears unwarrantable. That denial is sometimes defended on the ground that we have no indication of Jesus having been a visionary; but such a repudiation of a visionary element in our Lord is probably due to the assumption that ecstatic phenomena are the symptoms of an unbalanced temperament, and inconsistent with complete sanity. The answer is that we cannot apply our petty rule to the inner processes of spiritual genius; and that great religious personalities in all ages, whom no one would charge with morbidity, have recorded such extraordinary experiences, which they could not but clothe in the form of visions. That these very experiences render those who have them liable to the charge of madness is true enough, nor did the Lord escape such a suspicion (Mark iii. 21); but it is not the prophet who is mad—it is the world that is dull. That Jesus had His visionary and ecstatic moments we should only be able to doubt if we were to set aside such incidents as the temptation in the wilderness, the Transfiguration, His statement that He had beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven (Luke x. 18), His occasional sudden flights from human associations, and many episodes in which He "seems to be acting under the influence of some obscure, inexplicable storm and stress" which defies explanation.

But while we thus hold, on the one hand, to the reality—no matter how explained—of the Lord's vision in the Jordan valley, and while, on the other, we cannot think that the sense of being the Messiah arose suddenly and fully formed in Him on even so great an occasion, we must yet once more press the question as to what it was that this vision brought to Him. Obviously, our answer must be merely tentative; we would, however, hazard the view that there dawned on Him, together with an overpowering sense of God's love and nearness, the consciousness of being called and set apart for some great work, the nature of which would become clearer as time went on, and that He responded to that call, lead Him wherever it might, with the most utter and unreserved obedience, happy to be God's instrument, in the

blessed frame of mind which says, " Be it unto Me according to Thy word." That in that moment, and from that moment onward, He felt in a position of inexpressibly close communion with God—felt that He was indeed His Son—is entirely credible ; but just because of this new and blissful warmth and intimacy of His relation to His Father He could afford to await the further unfolding of the Father's holy will. Dawn had come ; day would follow.

If it is a fact that the words of the second Psalm, " Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee "—a psalm which in His day was already messianically interpreted—trembled through the soul of Jesus at His baptism, there was here a prelude, or *leitmotiv*, which would presently broaden into a fuller strain ; for the time being He simply felt Himself to be God's Son by reason of an overwhelming consciousness of God's call and God's love, and He could describe the manner in which that feeling took possession of Him only as the descent upon Him—the entering into Him—of that Holy Spirit which contemporary piety represented as a dove. We have already referred to the firm conviction of the early Church that " after the baptism which John preached, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power " ; that power was ere long to become manifest in mighty words and works.

Not immediately, however, was Jesus to proceed from His Baptism to the exercise of an independent ministry. How long was the interval which elapsed between these two points the scantiness and the vague chronology of our records does not enable us to state. We learn, it is true, that the Lord's activity in Galilee did not begin until after John had been put in prison (Mark i. 14 ; Matt. iv. 12) ; Matthew, indeed, who hints that Jesus' departure from the south was in the nature of a withdrawal, states explicitly that " from that time Jesus began to preach " (iv. 17), but unfortunately we do not know how soon after the Lord's baptism John fell into the tetrarch's hands. Until that catastrophe, our First Evangelist gives us to understand, Jesus remained in Judæa, probably at first more or less attached to John, but soon gathering disciples of His own ; such a parallel activity on the part of Jesus and the Baptist respectively is definitely related in the Fourth Gospel (iii. 22–26 ; *cf.* iv. 1), not without a hint of jealousy on the part of John's disciples.

But, whatever the duration of this supposed tentative Judæan ministry, it did not, according to the Synoptic testimony, follow

at once upon the baptism; the latter event was succeeded "straightway" (Mark i. 12) by the important crisis of the Lord's temptation in the wilderness. Of our witnesses, Mark, the earliest, relates the incident in two verses, limiting himself to the bare mention of the fact itself—"And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him" (i. 12, 13). Matthew (iv. 1–11) and Luke (iv. 1–13), on the other hand, give us detailed accounts, derived with a good deal of verbal agreement from their common written source; while the Fourth Evangelist characteristically omits all reference to the episode, which he considers unworthy of the Incarnate Word of God, who as such was above the possibility of being tempted. It is useless to speculate on the causes of Mark's extreme brevity: he may or may not have been ignorant of the details of the story as told by the other Synoptists, and in the latter case his reason for withholding them is not very apparent. As for Matthew's and Luke's narratives, they bear the marks of careful composition, and are works of literary skill and deliberate art.

The first question which arises is, of course, that of the historicity of this incident. As to this, the very fact of such a tradition having maintained itself in the Gospel record, when—as its omission by the Fourth Evangelist shows—there must have been a strong disposition to consign it to oblivion, is perhaps decisive; the tradition rested on too high authority to be lightly dismissed, and that authority could, in the nature of things, be only that of Jesus Himself. At the same time, it is only true to say that, were it not for so conclusive an argument in the affirmative, we should have reason to regard the story with strong suspicion.

For in the first place, it was part of the current expectations concerning the Messiah that He was to wage successful war upon Satan and his agents, the "unclean spirits," and the Apocalypse gives a dramatic account of this fight. That is the meaning of those Gospel narratives which tell us of the alarm of the demons in beholding Jesus, in whom they recognize the One who is come to destroy them (Mark i. 24, iii. 11, etc.). Indeed, Jesus Himself seems to have interpreted His healing activity as a campaign against Satan, and to have pointed to the casting out of the evil spirits which tormented human frames as the sure sign of God's Kingdom having already come upon the world (Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20). Such a popular conception of the messianic office might in itself have been sufficient to give rise to a midrash

concerning a victorious encounter with Satan at the very beginning of the Lord's public career.

In the second place, it has to be remembered that such encounters between a saviour-sage and the personified principle of evil are the common *motif* of other religions besides Christianity, and may be found in the sacred writings alike of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Ahriman seeks to beguile Zarathustra—by whom he knows his dominion to be menaced—with the offer of sovereignty over many nations, if he will renounce the laws of Ahura Mazda, but meets with refusal. Gotama Buddha, on the night of his "great renunciation," is tempted by Mara, the spirit of evil, with the promise of universal rule if he will abandon his saving purpose, but is not to be persuaded; and, after he has received complete enlightenment, he is assailed for seven weeks, but all in vain, first by Mara, and then by Mara's three daughters, Lust and Craving and Discontent; after which period he is ministered to by the four guardian angels.

Thirdly, in the form in which we read it in Matthew and Luke, the temptation story is quite unmistakably influenced by Old Testament precedents. The forty days' fast has its parallels in that of Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. xxxiv. 28; Deut. ix. 9) and of Elijah in the desert (1 Kings xix. 8); while the narrative of the Evangelists is full from first to last of reminiscences of Deut. vi.–viii., every one of Jesus' answers to Satan being taken from these chapters. Now the general situation presented in that portion of the Old Testament is summed up in the words of Deut. viii. 2, 3:

> And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

It is difficult to resist the impression that here is the prototype from which the form, if not the substance of the narratives in Matthew and Luke is derived; that just as Israel, the son of God (*cf.* Exod. iv. 22), was tempted and subjected to hunger during the forty years in the wilderness, so Jesus, the Son of God, was made to pass through analogous experiences during the forty days He spent in the desert. The piety of the age loved these

parallels, and we may on every hand discover the tendency in the Gospels to relate events in the life of Jesus in a shape which approximates them as closely as possible to some incident in the Old Testament. That this process involved some sacrifice of historical accuracy is obvious ; that in the present instance, so far as the outward garb of the Lord's temptations is concerned, we are not dealing with history at all, should need no detailed demonstration. Was there nevertheless a nucleus of outward fact or facts round which the narrative grew ?

This brings us to a fourth and highly important point. If we read that the Tempter suggested to Jesus that He should prove Himself to be the Son of God by performing some physical miracle, we cannot but be reminded of the demand of the Pharisees that He should show them a sign from heaven (Mark viii. 11 ; Matt. xii. 38 ; Luke xi. 16). Luke describes this request as a temptation, and Jesus may very likely have regarded it in that light ; at any rate, He did not comply with it. Again, if Satan is represented as offering Jesus world-wide sovereignty, that was exactly the popular conception of the messianic *rôle*, and it is more than possible that there were those who tried to persuade the Lord to assume it. The Fourth Evangelist, who has so little to say about the Kingdom of God, appears to be following a reliable tradition[1] when he tells us (vi. 15) that there was an attempt to take Jesus by force and make Him king, but that He eluded it by withdrawing into the mountain. This, of course, was a very palpable temptation—viz. to conform to the popular expectation of what the Messiah would do—but Jesus resisted it. Finally, if Matthew's version of the conflict attributes to Jesus the words, "*Get thee hence, Satan,*" the same Evangelist, following Mark, also tells us that when Peter would have dissuaded his Lord from going to Jerusalem, He turned on him, saying, "*Get thee behind me, Satan*" (Matt. xvi. 23 ; Mark viii. 33), thus repelling yet another temptation. It does not appear too venturesome a hypothesis that the extended narratives of the Temptation which Matthew and Luke give us present in an imaginative and highly focused form some actual experiences with which He met in the course of His ministry. Even so, it is conceivable, and, as we shall see, even probable, that the one who so imaginatively shaped and presented these experiences was none other than Jesus Himself.

For, returning to the fixed point with which we started—the certainty that the story of the Lord's temptation could not have

[1] See chap. ix., p. 147.

maintained its place in the Gospel tradition, had it not rested on a basis of fact—we now have to ask what that basis was, or may have been. Any answer that may be attempted will lie open to the charge of being purely conjectural; but a conjecture may be unprovable without being therefore improbable.

Upon any reading of the baptismal experience which Jesus had undergone, that experience was one which determined all His subsequent action; if the interpretation we have given of it is anywhere near the truth, it gave a wholly new and unexpected turn to His outlook. He had felt the very Spirit of God invading His soul; He had received, as plainly as by any uttered voice, the assurance of being the Son—not a son, but the Son—of God. That that assurance *immediately* translated itself into the consciousness of being the Messiah—the destined King of His people, He to whom all judgment was to be committed—we have seen reason for thinking highly improbable. At the same time, Jesus cannot but have asked Himself, and that very shortly after the baptism itself, "In what sense, then, am I the Son of God? What effects on the plane of action should flow from the feeling which now possesses Me?" That such questionings threw Him into an intense emotion is likely enough; and that under the stress of that emotion He sought the solitude of the desert, there to gain clearness and to think out His position in communion with the Father, presents no difficulty to belief. Thus the statement may be unquestioningly accepted that Jesus was led—nay, driven (Mark i. 12)—by the Spirit from Jordan's banks into the wilderness, and that the period which He spent there was one of spiritual wrestling and inner conflict, in which the recurrent question was, "If I am the Son of God—*what then? What follows?*"

The problem for Him, if we interpret it rightly, was this: in that Psalm (ii. 7) whose words had echoed in His heart, the son of God spoken of is the then reigning King of Israel; but later Judaism, as we already remarked, had given to that lyric a messianic interpretation, of which Jesus could not be unaware. If, therefore, He knew Himself, at the moment of baptism, to be the Son of God, did it not follow that He must be the Messiah? And yet, how could that be? Here we believe we touch on the source of His inner conflict and unrest: *the apparent impossibility of reconciling the consciousness of His Sonship with what appeared the only admissible interpretation of that consciousness*, viz. as pointing to Himself as the Messiah. Many attempts have been made of recent years to account for the reserve, the reticence, of

Jesus in regard to His Messiahship, which it is evident He did not claim till near the end, and various reasons have been put forward for His keeping what is called the " messianic secret " ; but the presupposition of all these argumentations is that He was clearly convinced from the outset of being the Messiah, and it is just this which is more than doubtful. He had reasons upon reasons for being in two minds on that subject ; if the Messiah was by common consent expected to come in supernatural splendour, with the clouds of heaven, how did such a description fit Him who had come in poverty, a working man, from a Galilean village ? Nevertheless, He would seem to hear a tempting voice saying to Him, " ' If Thou art the Son of God,' claim the dignity, the prerogative, the superhuman power of the Messiah ! Proclaim Thyself Ruler—astonish the world by signs and wonders—rise from want to material affluence ! " Not once or twice may such suggestions have presented themselves from within, and this we may imagine to be the experience, the moral and spiritual conflict, portrayed for us under the forms of the temptation story. The victory in that struggle consisted just in our Lord's recognition that all these suggestions were truly in the nature of lures, and unworthy of His Divine Sonship. The Messiah whom His countrymen expected was a military and political personage ; not to such an activity, not to such a destiny, did Jesus feel Himself called. In not taking the popular, the lower path, in patiently waiting for fuller light and the further leading of His Father, lay His sublime triumph over temptation, a triumph repeated again and again. We come to the conclusion that *for a long time our Lord kept no messianic secret, because there was as yet no messianic secret to keep.*

So much for the core of the episode, the heart of the experience embodied in the story which Matthew and Luke derived from their common source. It would, of course, be vain for us to try and determine how much that detailed recital owed to subsequent elaboration ; but we need not hesitate to think that Jesus represented all untrue thoughts and unworthy suggestions, both to Himself and to others, as lures held out to Him by an actual, personal devil. In believing in such a being of supernatural power and malignity, the arch-tempter of man and arch-enemy of God, " by whose envy death had entered the world " (Wisd. ii. 24), and who always aimed at the undoing of God's favourites (Jubilees vii. 16)—of an Abraham, of a Job—Jesus shared the standpoint of His age ; just as He thought of Himself as waging warfare against the kingdom of Satan (Matt. xii.

25–28), so He felt Himself the especial object of Satan's enmity, precisely because He was the Son of God. Holding this belief, and being a child of the East, with an Oriental's realistic imagination, we need not doubt in the least that our Lord had an actual vision, perhaps more than one—actual, but subjective—of the Tempter assailing Him ; *i.e.*, He visualized His soul's experience, projected it outward, and presented it to Himself and to the disciples clothed in the form of things seen and heard. In saying that Satan tempted Him to command stones to become bread, or to leap from the pinnacle of the temple, or that he took Him unto an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, He would no more intend to be taken literally than, *e.g.*, Amos meant to be so taken when he said that he saw Yahveh standing beside a wall with a plumbline in His hand, or that He showed him a basket of summer-fruit. Jesus, like the prophet, would simply be using figurative language, for the purpose of setting forth as graphically and concretely as possible His encounters with certain powerful temptations ; it is as if He were saying, " I saw myself on the temple's parapet," or, " I seemed to myself to be standing on the summit of a high mountain, with all the world stretched out at my feet."[1]

It is more than possible that Jesus, in the strains and stresses of His activity, when assailed by doubts and other temptations, found frequent comfort in those Deuteronomic quotations which we find embodied in the Evangelists' narratives. If in the days following the baptism He was troubled by wonder how He should henceforth, if He gave up His handicraft, make sure of so much as His daily bread, He would fortify Himself by the reflection that " man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord " (Deut. viii. 3). If ever for an instant He felt inclined to put His Sonship to a test which would impress His nation, and to call on God to enable His chosen One to give a " sign " of supernatural power, His good sense and good feeling would at once intervene, since to do anything of the kind would be to " tempt "—*i.e.* to challenge—the Lord (Deut. vi. 16). If at any time the popular idea of the Messiah, the idea of earthly kingship, arose in His mind, and the desirable end suggested the obvious means—the preaching of a

[1] The attempt has been made to represent a reported saying of the Lord's, quoted by Origen and Jerome from the Gospel according to the Hebrews—" And straightway the Holy Spirit, my mother, took me by one of my hairs, and bore me away to the great mountain called Tabor "—as the introduction of His own account of the temptation ; but, even assuming that the saying is a genuine one, possibly based on a reminiscence of Ezek. viii. 3, where the prophet speaks of the Spirit having seized him by the hair and carried him aloft, there seems no ground for connecting it with the temptation story.

holy war against the foreign rulers—He perceived that to set His heart on such a personal aim would be to render obeisance to the sinister power called by the Fourth Evangelist "the Prince of this world," whereas it was written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Deut. vi. 13). Repulsed by these weapons from the heavenly armoury, temptation recedes and fades away; "then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." Nothing could exceed the beauty and fitness of the note on which this poetic presentation of a spiritual experience closes.

We incline, then, to the view that while the story, as we read it in the Gospels, bears the marks of conscious literary art, it was most probably elaborated from hints supplied by our Lord Himself, speaking in this form of the struggles He had to wage, and quoting the words of Scripture which reinforced His soul's pure intent. But we can also well understand that the primitive Christian Church, in spite of the tendency to remove her Lord from the purely human category which a tradition of moral conflict suggests, had its own reasons for preserving a recollection which helped to solve certain problems such as could not fail to press—or be pressed—upon her members. If Jesus had indeed been the Christ, the Messiah, it would be asked, why was the manner of His appearance so utterly different from what everybody had always expected it to be? Why had He not seized the sceptre, and set a crown upon His head? Why, when directly challenged, had He not worked some miracle which would have confounded His adversaries, and served to accredit Him beyond all possibility of doubt? Why, instead of manifesting Himself in glory, had He come in poverty, a man who had not where to lay His head? The answer to all these questions was that for Jesus to adopt any of these methods of self-assertion would have been a yielding to Satanic suggestion, such as He had indeed encountered, but conquered; that His was a different conception of Christhood, of Messiahship; that being originally in the form of God, He deliberately emptied Himself of His celestial glory, taking the form of a servant, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross; wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the Name which is above every name (Phil. ii. 6–9). That was the Church's answer to the gibes of her enemies, and in returning that answer she found the story of the temptation supremely and legitimately valuable.

To this great significance of the episode we may add another : we cannot sufficiently thank the Synoptic writers for placing in the forefront of their narrative the fact that the Lord was really tempted, passed through at least one acute moral crisis, not the semblance of one—just as He was a real Man, and not the semblance of a man ; that He wrestled with temptation, knew besetment and conflict, and prevailed. Had He been, as the Fourth Gospel already presents Him, untempted and untemptable, He would have been *pro tanto* a permanent Stranger to us ; One in whose marble perfection there ran no human blood, there beat no human heart ; One who could neither sympathize with us, nor be to us either an example or an inspiration. The great truth concerning the character of our Lord is, not that He was *unable to sin*, but that He was *able not to sin* ; wherein consists at once His sinlessness and His Saviourhood. " For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted " (Heb. ii. 18). " For we have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need " (Heb. iv. 15, 16).

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

"Now after that John was delivered up," we read, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel" (Mark i. 14, 15; *cf.* Matt. iv. 12, 17). From the Judæan desert and the regions about Jordan the scene changes to the Galilean lake-side; it is here that the specific message of Jesus will be delivered, here that we shall get the amplest glimpses of His Personality and the character of His preaching. Advisedly, we speak of glimpses only; for there is, it must be yet once more insisted, no close-knit continuity in the Gospel narrative; the incidents and sayings related by the Evangelists are loosely strung together, and we have little guarantee as to the precise juncture when this episode happened, or that word was uttered. There are big gaps in the records, and, while we can construct a general framework into which the Lord's ministry falls, the order of the details is for the most part left to surmise, or even past surmise, especially as the sacred writers are by no means always in agreement.

Instances of this chronological uncertainty are all too numerous. Such a cardinal incident as the call of the first disciples is placed before Jesus' preaching in Capernaum by Mark (i. 16–20), after it by Luke (v. 1–11), who couples it with a miraculous draught of fishes, of which Mark knows nothing, but a parallel to which John relates as occurring after the resurrection (xxi. 10, 11). Or take the bestowal of the name of Peter on Simon. According to Mark iii. 16 Jesus gave this surname to the disciple when He constituted His circle of twelve intimate followers; according to Matt. xvi. 18 the occasion was that of Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi; according to John i. 42 it was that of their first meeting, viz. in Judæa. The Fourth Gospel, indeed, tells us that it was there that both Andrew and Simon and Philip attached themselves to Jesus (John i. 40–45), and in the same narrative a more or less extended preaching and baptizing ministry in the south precedes our Lord's public appearance in Galilee.

It is, as we have already seen, perfectly possible, and even probable, that there was such an intermediate period as the Fourth Evangelist asserts, and that Jesus remained for a while near the Baptist, who had so powerfully attracted Him; but when catastrophe overtook the desert-preacher, He Himself withdrew to His native Galilee, where in the first instance He simply promulgated John's urgent invitation to repentance, in view of the approaching Kingdom. To proclaim the Kingdom, however, was not to proclaim Himself the Messiah; on the contrary, whenever some unbalanced person addressed Him by a messianic title—as in Mark i. 24—He sternly forbade it. Such a command of silence does not mean that He would not have His secret divulged, but that He declined the designation as unfitting.

The principal scene of our Lord's activity was the north-westerly shore of the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, where three townships are especially mentioned in connection with His deeds and teaching, viz. Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. Chorazin was a hill-town, whose name is still recognizable in the modern version of Kerâze, to-day a mere heap of ruins. An hour's walk, steeply downhill, from Kerâze brings the traveller to Tellhum, on the borders of the lake, the ancient Capernaum, where the débris of a great stone edifice are pointed out as the remains of the synagogue where Jesus preached; there may have been, in later times, a Christian Church, erected just to the east of it. Walking along the shore to the south-west, one comes in a little while upon the modern village of 'Ain et-Tabigha, supposed to cover the site of Bethsaida—a very doubtful conjecture—and still farther south lies el-Medjdel, in which it is easy to recognize Magdala. It is one of the geographical problems of the Gospel whether there were two places of the name of Bethsaida, one on the western and one on the eastern side of Jordan, not far from the lake-side, or whether the eastern Bethsaida—Bethsaida-Julias, the modern et-Tell—was the only locality of that name referred to in our narratives.[1]

The question arises why Jesus should have begun His ministry, not in His own home, but by the Galilean lake. That He did so seems certain, though Luke (iv. 16–30), places a vivid scene in the synagogue at Nazareth at the head of the Lord's public appearances; Jesus reads a passage from Isaiah (lxi. 1, 2), which He applies to Himself, telling His hearers, "This day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your

[1] See chap. ix., p. 142.

ears." Even in this Lucan narrative, however, we find a recollection of the fact that Nazareth was not the starting-point of the Lord's preaching and healing, viz. in the words, "Doubtless ye will say unto me, . . . Whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country" (iv. 23). Assuredly, then, it was at Capernaum that there occurred the first recorded manifestations of that new power which had descended upon Jesus in the Jordan valley; and we may take it that the Fourth Evangelist is correct in stating that the association of Jesus with Andrew and Simon had already begun in the days when the Baptist was gathering multitudes around him, and that when John was imprisoned, Jesus returned with these, and possibly other Galilean disciples, to carry on John's propaganda in the north.

For such an enterprise Nazareth, hidden among the hills, offered no scope; Capernaum, on the other hand, where Andrew and Simon lodged with Simon's mother-in-law, could not have been improved upon as a centre for the new movement, being situated on the great trade route to Damascus, besides being a garrison town (Matt. viii. 5–13) and the seat of a custom-house (Mark ii. 14). This thriving locality, throbbing with life, proved excellently adapted to be the first headquarters of the Gospel, and was so frequently visited by Jesus that Matt. ix. 1 could actually speak of it, though erroneously, as "His own city." There, in the ever-memorable spring of A.D. 29, Jesus appeared, the Bearer of Good Tidings, aflame with the glorious hope of an imminent supreme event, and proclaiming, to all who had ears to hear, the message: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe in the Gospel" (Mark i. 15; Matt. iv. 17).

This phrase, "The time is fulfilled," strikes a significantly and exclusively eschatological keynote as that of the early proclamation of the Gospel; for the central idea of all the apocalyptic thought of the age was that God had appointed a time when salvation should draw nigh to Israel, when its humiliation was to cease, and the new, the supernatural dispensation to begin. What the Baptist had announced, what Jesus was announcing, was that the great hour was about to strike when Israel's hopes were to be realized, when the captive daughter of Zion should be redeemed, and the reign of Yahveh under His anointed Vicegerent—thought of at once as a descendant of David and as a heavenly being coming with the clouds—should commence. The sands were running out;

let all by sincere repentance prepare themselves for the Day of the Lord.

It has to be reiterated that we shall never gain a proper understanding of Jesus as a historical Figure unless we realize that *this* was the starting-point of His preaching, *these* the expectations which He uttered with intense and enthusiastic conviction throughout that Galilean springtime ; it was His moral grandeur and spiritual insight which were presently to carry Him, almost ere He became aware of it, far beyond these eschatological speculations, which were destined to remain unrealized. In conscious intention He began the deliverance of His message simply on the note of John the Baptist ; by reason of His unique ethical genius and His experience of Divine Sonship, He emerged as the Christ in a sense which had never yet been associated with that term. But He Himself had yet to find Himself ; He had still to discover the meaning of that inner assurance which told Him that He was the Son of God.

The nucleus of that circle of disciples by which we find the Lord surrounded in the Gospel narratives dated back, as we have seen, to His sojourn in Judæa ; it was in those early days, before He began to preach in Galilee, that He had attached Andrew and Simon and Philip to Himself. Had we been dependent on the version of Simon's and Andrew's, James' and John's, call as given in Mark i. 16–20 and Matt. iv. 18–22, we should be left with the impression that Jesus was meeting them for the first time, after His return from the Jordan valley, that He miraculously and on the instant discerned their fitness to be His followers and fishers of men, and that they there and then gave up their means of earning a livelihood.[1] This may be the impression which Mark sought to convey, and the manner in which he believed these calls were given and accepted ; but it is more likely that Jesus had known these men for a while, had found them sympathetic and earnest, and that at length He invited them to a closer and more continuous association with Himself—probable, too, that they " forsook their nets," at least for good, not immediately but only ultimately.

From the first, and down to the close of His Galilean ministry, Jesus was to be surrounded by multitudes ; but almost from the beginning He seems to have formed the plan of gathering together a small chosen community of intimates, who were to be distinguished from " them that were without " (Mark iv. 11), *i.e.*,

[1] Luke's version of the incident v. 1–11, is a shade less abrupt.

the amorphous, enthusiastic, but not very thoughtful crowd. Our Synoptists represent this choice of an inner circle of friends (Mark iii. 13–19; Matt. x. 2–4, Luke vi. 12–16; *cf.* Acts i. 13) as having been made on some one definite occasion; but the very manner in which Mark relates this alleged event—

> And He goeth into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and cast out devils—

bears the stamp of legend, and not of history; we have only to try to visualize the process in order to feel sure that things did not happen in this formal manner, with the solemnity of a ceremonial. That Jesus did surround Himself with twelve specially intimate disciples was fully understood in the time of St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5), and in Acts i. 21–26, a less reliable authority, the place left vacant by Judas is filled by Matthias, who is "numbered with the eleven disciples." Presumably this sacred number had something to do with eschatological expectations, and corresponded with the number of the tribes of Israel, whom the disciples were to judge "in the Kingdom, seated on twelve thrones" (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30); but it is not at all likely that they were all appointed simultaneously. It is also at least questionable whether this circle was ever quite strictly limited to a sacred number, a limitation savouring of a formalism little in harmony with the free spirit of Jesus; it is at any rate a plausible suggestion that the unnamed disciple whom Jesus loved (John xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20) was not one of the Twelve, but a John of Jerusalem. We also know that among the number of the Lord's intimate friends and constant followers there were not a few devoted women, some of whom are mentioned by name (Mark xvi. 1; Luke viii. 2, 3; Matt. xxvii. 56).

It is a noteworthy circumstance that while we have four lists of these disciples *par excellence*, not two of them are in strict agreement. "Matthew the publican," who is named in Matt. x. 3 (*cf. ib.* ix. 9), is the personage who appears in Mark ii. 14 under the name of Levi, the son of Alphæus, but is left unmentioned in Mark's list of the Twelve, which speaks instead of *James*, the son of Alphæus. In lieu of Thaddæus we find in Luke and Acts the name of Judas, the son of James, while some manuscripts read Lebbæus both in Matthew and Mark. All this shows not only that by the time the lists were drawn up tradition had become

uncertain, but also how little of individual significance there clung to most of the bearers of these names. In the Gospels the majority of them play hardly any individual parts, and to us they are " no other than a row of shadow-shapes that come and go "—mere names, and not all of them established beyond doubt. The very appellation of Judas—" Iscariot "—is as problematical as his character, for its common rendering, " man of Kerioth," is no more than an unconfirmed guess. Simon the Cananæan, as Luke's translation, " the Zealot " (vi. 15), appears to show, may have originally belonged to that party, to whom perhaps Jesus alludes as the " men of violence." The purely Hellenic names of Andrew and Philip are of interest as suggesting that Greek was probably not a wholly unknown language in the immediate entourage of Jesus, who seems to have been able to understand Pilate without an interpreter. Why James and John were surnamed " sons of thunder " is not very apparent ; that this sobriquet had reference to their quick and fiery temperament (*cf.* Luke ix. 54, where they ask if they shall pray for fire to fall from heaven) is only a guess—the appellation does not appear in Matthew or Luke. Nor, as already stated, can we say either when or why Simon received the name of Cephas, or Peter, *i.e.*, a stone, by which Mark calls him from this poin (iii. 15) onwards, John from the very first, while Matthew seems to indicate that it was not bestowed till he had confessed Jesus as the Christ. Even of the man himself, the very chief of the apostles, to whose reminiscences of his Lord we are indebted beyond all telling, we know extremely little from the Gospels ; standing so close to the Light of the world, all lesser luminaries paled their ineffectual fires.

It is characteristic of the temperamental difference between the Baptist and Jesus that whereas the former had gone forth from the habitations of men to sojourn in the wilderness, the latter entered the towns and synagogues of His countrymen, so long as He could find a hearing in them. We see Him, shortly after His return from the south, teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum on a Sabbath—literally " on the Sabbath days " (Mark i. 21–28 ; Luke iv. 31–37) ; and, while we are not told what He taught, we receive, doubtless through Peter's personal recollections, a vivid idea of the immense impression He created. The teaching function had largely and inevitably fallen into the hands of the scribes ; anyone else who assumed its exercise challenged unfavourable comparison with this trained professional

class, and men would ask whether he taught in their manner, and whether his style showed him to have "authority," *i.e.* the proper qualification. As Jesus spoke, His hearers made the surprising discovery that here was One who taught not at all like the scribes, and yet with the unmistakable note of authority—an authority based, not on precedents, but on direct inspiration, the sense of a commission from on high, such as Amos felt when he said, "The Lord God hath spoken; who can but prophesy?"

On one such Sabbath day, as Jesus was teaching, it happened that suddenly a cry pierced the tense atmosphere; it proceeded from one of those nervous sufferers whom the belief of that age regarded as possessed by an unclean spirit, one of Satan's emissaries, sent to plague poor mortals with all manner of afflictions. We know that this view of the nature of disease was so firmly rooted that the patients themselves shared it, and even at the time of their attacks occasionally spoke in the character of their supposed tormentors. That people who were already unbalanced should be thrown into violent paroxysms by powerful preaching is not a matter for astonishment; but, moreover, Jesus was preaching the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God, which meant the utter defeat of the kingdom of Satan—hence the man's cry, in the *rôle* of the demon, "Art thou come to destroy us?" But, as suddenly as this shriek had rung out, there was liberated in Jesus a power of which He Himself had quite possibly been unconscious up to that moment. With the quickness of reflex action, Himself no doubt highly wrought, He commanded the offending voice to be silent, and the demon to come out of the man. What ensued shows the case to have been one of epileptoid hysteria; the patient immediately had a violent fit, which left him completely exhausted, nervous reaction following upon the convulsion; that is the meaning of the demon coming out of him with a loud voice. Though we cannot be sure that a permanent cure was effected,[1] we can well understand that the effect produced at the time upon that congregation was profound; and no less profound, perhaps, was that upon Jesus Himself, who of course implicitly believed in demoniacal possession, and interpreted the power He had just manifested as that of casting out demons.

Now this practice of exorcism—what we should call cure by suggestion, or faith-healing—had a wide vogue, and was resorted to, according to one saying of the Lord's (Matt. xii. 27), by the

[1] There were sometimes relapses, as in the case of Mary Magdalene, "from whom seven devils had gone out" (Luke viii. 2).

disciples of the scribes themselves; what distinguished Jesus from other practitioners was not only the far greater power which we can believe Him to have wielded, but the fact that He neither plied exorcism as a trade, nor had recourse to incantations, magic formulas, or mysterious apparatus, but relied solely upon His word and possibly His touch. That He performed cures, and even very remarkable cures, is not to be questioned, though doubtless tradition both exaggerated and multiplied these wonderful works. In the most authentic cases of which we read, the patients almost forced themselves upon Him, and by their own vehemence helped to generate in Him that power—those gusts of enthusiasm and flashes of conquering will—which He Himself could only ascribe to the direct agency of God, and which He then brought to bear upon them. Jesus, on the one hand, did not attach supreme importance to this side of His activity, declining to subordinate to it what He conceived as His real mission; on the other hand, He saw in this strange power of His an additional proof of the nearness of the Kingdom, for the defeat of Satan's rule meant the triumph of God's. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons," He says, "then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke xi. 20). That, to Jesus, was not picture-language; the devil and his legions were intensely real to Him, and the coming of the Divine Sovereignty which He preached involved their downfall and destruction.

After that exciting experience in the Capernaum synagogue we read of the cure of Simon's mother-in-law (Mark i. 29–31; Matt. viii. 14–16; Luke iv. 38–39), which is told in very simple, matter-of-fact language, without expressions of astonishment. Since we do not know the nature of what is vaguely described as a fever, we can only surmise that the disease from which she was suffering was of a nervous character; moreover, one has often seen patients rallying, at least temporarily, under the impetus of a strong emotion, or stimulated by some exceptional occurrence, such as the visit of this powerful preacher to Peter's house undoubtedly was. In Luke's version the fever becomes a "great" fever, and Jesus "rebukes" it, just as He has "rebuked" the demon in the preceding section.

During that day we may be sure that Jesus and His preaching and healing had been everywhere discussed in Capernaum. After sundown—*i.e.*, when the Sabbath was over—numbers of people crowded round Peter's house, and brought their sick to be healed (Mark i. 32–34; Matt. viii. 16, 17; Luke iv. 40, 41).

Unquestionably, further cures took place; unquestionably, even our earliest account, which says that "*all the city* was gathered together at the door," uses heightened language. But while Mark says that they brought *all* the sick and possessed to Jesus, and He healed *many*, Matthew improves on this by stating that they brought *many* and He healed *all*, and Luke tells us that He laid His hands on *every one* of them and healed them. Matthew adds that this healing *en masse* had for its purpose to fulfil a prophecy of Isaiah; Mark states that Jesus did not suffer the demons to speak because they knew Him; Luke alters this into the statement that the demons cried out, "Thou art the Son of God," and that He forbade them to speak because they knew that He was the Christ. One sees the steady growth of the tradition, and the tendency towards amplification and embellishment.

But the strain of the day had been excessive for our Lord; not only was the nervous tax which these cures involved severe, but He dreaded being diverted from His real purpose and drawn into a merely therapeutic activity. Hence, with one of those brusque impulses to which He was subject—a kind of being led or driven by the Spirit—He left the house before daybreak (Mark i. 35–39; Luke iv. 42–44), and betook Himself to a solitary place for prayer and self-collection. Pursued and overtaken by Simon and his party, and urged to return, He declined absolutely to comply with this request, and that in significant language; He desired to go into the neighbouring towns, He replied to Simon's persuasions, to preach there also, significantly adding that it was to this end—*i.e.*, to proclaim the good news of the approaching reign of God, and not to perform cures—that He had come forth.

Extreme difficulties attend the story placed next by Mark—i. 40–45; *cf.* Matt. viii. 1–4; Luke v. 12–16—viz. the cleansing of a leper.[1] There is no reason to assume that, if it belongs to history, it happened at this juncture; Mark inserts it here in order to bridge over the interval between Jesus' departure from Capernaum and His apparently almost immediate return, while Matthew places it after the Sermon on the Mount, and Luke tells us vaguely that it happened "in a certain city." But for anyone who knows what leprosy is, it is *a priori* hard to believe that Jesus with just a word healed a disease which is so deeply rooted

[1] The story of the cleansing of ten lepers, which is peculiar to Luke (xvii. 11–14), may be an amplified version of this incident.

as to defy medical science ; it is more likely that we have here an instance of the tendency to credit the Lord with powers analogous to those ascribed by legend to Old Testament characters like Moses and Elisha, both of whom were said to have cured lepers (Num. xii. 10 ff., 2 Kings v. 9 ff.). There are, it is true, stated to be instances of medically-attested cures of lupus by the Holy Coat at Trèves, which, if genuine, show the extraordinary power of suggestion and auto-suggestion ; and certainly we shall not dogmatize as to what Jesus could or could not do. But the story is full of problematical features *per se*. Why, after restoring the man to health, should Jesus have sternly inveighed against him and driven him forth, charging him not to tell anyone of his cure ? Could such an event be kept secret ? And if he was also to show himself to the priest and offer the statutory sacrifices for cleansing, was not that tantamount to publishing the fact ? We can only surmise, (*a*) that the man was suffering from some slight skin disease, which had been wrongly diagnosed as leprosy ; and (*b*) that he went to Jesus, asking Him, not to *make* him clean, but to *pronounce* him clean,[1] a function which, according to Lev. xiii., only a priest was entitled to perform. Jesus may have acceded to the man's request, but have resented the unfairness of being forced into gratuitous opposition to the religious authorities, and commanded the patient to present himself before the priest, obtain his official " clean bill," and not to drag Him further into the matter.

While we do not know how long Jesus was absent from Capernaum, and while Mark, after stating that He " could no more openly enter into a city," represents Him in the very next verse as having " entered again into Capernaum after some days " (ii. 1), it may be possible that His return was brought about by the request of the centurion, related in Matt. viii. 5–13 and Luke vii. 1–10, to heal his valued servant. Impossible as it is to deny that the cure may have been wrought at a distance, as both Evangelists—or, rather, their source—represent it to have been, it is at any rate difficult to believe that this heathen centurion, however well disposed to Judaism (Luke vii. 4, 5), would have professed himself unworthy of his house being entered by a Jewish rabbi ; we have also to remember that the only other story of a patient being healed by Jesus at a distance likewise concerns a heathen, viz., the Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter—Mark vii. 24–30 ; Matt. xv. 21–28—and that in each case it is represented as

[1] The word bears both meanings ; *cf.* Mark vii. 19, " [This He said,] making all meats clean."

the reward of a faith greater than the Lord was wont to encounter in Israel.

Whatever the occasion of His return, or whatever the length of His absence, Jesus was back in Capernaum shortly after His abrupt departure, teaching in Peter's house, and speaking " the word," *i.e.*, the word of the approaching Kingdom (Mark ii. 1–12; Matt. ix. 1–8; Luke v. 17–26). The one room of the cottage is inconveniently crowded; we may suppose that from twenty to thirty persons are present, and possibly a similar number are pressing round the open door, barring entrance, in their eager interest, to a little procession of four, who carry a paralytic, and seek in vain to get through that excited and tightly jammed assemblage. Not to be baulked, however, the four, with their burden, go round to the back and gain the flat roof by the outside staircase, after which they proceed to make a hole in the clay ceiling, sufficiently large to let their patient through. The story seems to rest on Peter's recollections, and, improbable as this detail is, we have no sufficient reason to follow Matthew, who apparently rejects it; though one would think that a little more persuasion or a little more patience would have had the desired effect, without resort to these very drastic measures. But Jesus, we read, was greatly impressed by the very vehemence of their faith—not unlike the disposition of those " men of violence " who were for " taking " the Kingdom by force; and, looking with compassion upon the sufferer, of whose antecedents He had probably heard, and whose manner seems to have shown penitence for the excesses that had brought on his ailment, told him that his sins were forgiven. We cannot but assume that there were some dropped links which the narrative fails to record, and it seems likely that this pronouncement was preceded by some conversation between our Lord and the patient.

But at once there appeared all the elements of collision; for certain scribes among the company chose to be offended at what they felt to be gross presumption on Jesus' part. " Who can forgive sins but One, even God? " they asked. It was true that Jesus had not " forgiven " the man's sins, but *declared* them forgiven, as any priest might have done after a sin-offering had been made; but Jesus was not a priest, and in declaring this—perhaps notorious—sinner forgiven, He laid Himself open to the charge of usurping, not only priestly, but Divine prerogatives. As a matter of fact, He spoke out of the depths of His consciousness as the Son of God, reinforced by His quick insight into the truly penitent frame of mind of this patient, who needed spiritual

even more than bodily healing. It is noteworthy that it was the felt and probably expressed antagonism of the scribes which, as it were, liberated the energy of the Lord and, in proof of His authority in pronouncing the pardon of the paralytic's sins, He now commanded him to take up his bed and walk—with instantaneous and overwhelming success. Cases of paralysis which yield to powerful emotion are as well known and authenticated as instances where soldiers regain sight and speech under some sudden shock. We have here an illustration of healing by suggestion, wrought by a mighty personality; the agent is faith in Healer and healed alike—that of Jesus in His Father, that of the paralytic in the Lord. It is worthy of remark that we are told that the witnesses glorified *God*, attributing to *Him* the wonderful work they had just beheld; Matthew says that they glorified God, who had given such power *to men* (ix. 8).

We leave for discussion in a subsequent chapter the question whether Jesus is likely, as the narrative states, to have referred to Himself at this opening stage of His ministry as the Son of man, a self-designation tantamount to a definite messianic claim. What, however, we must point out at once is that, if Mark's order is to be trusted at all, Jesus' public activity aroused from the outset the bitter hostility of the representatives of official religion. It has sometimes been held that the opening part of the Galilean ministry was marked by almost unclouded and growing success; but that is not the impression one gains from our earliest witness. It would appear that Jesus met with an early opposition in Capernaum, His headquarters; similarly, Luke tells us (iv. 29) that after preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth He was violently ejected from the town; and from quite an early juncture (Mark iii. 1–7) onwards He is no more found speaking in the synagogues, but withdraws with His disciples to the sea. No doubt He attracted great multitudes for a time, but from the first He also excited official ill-will and suspicion. That this was largely due to His attitude toward the Law, and especially the observance of the Sabbath, is certain enough; but above all there was that which lay behind this attitude—the implicit claims He made for Himself in His free treatment of ritual and ceremonial. It was the consciousness of supreme authority, born of His new sense of Divine Sonship, which came out without His so much as intending it—nay, in spite of inherited instincts of reverence for the Law (Matt. v. 17–19). The fact is that "He could not be hid"; He had but to show Himself for friends and foes to ask, "Who then is this?" A profoundly disturbing

element had entered the world, not to be ignored, and from the first it generated an atmosphere of conflict.

We shall now deal very summarily with a number of episodes which belong to this period. Capernaum (Mark ii. 13–17 ; Matt. ix. 9–13 ; Luke v. 27–32) was a customs station, and among the officials—the hated *publicani*, or excisemen—is one Levi (or Matthew—Matt. ix. 9 ; one sees how dim these traditions were), who is won by the preaching of Jesus, becomes a disciple, and invites the Master and his fellow-disciples to supper, where a number of other publicans and so-called " sinners," *i.e.*, people lax in their observance of the Law, are present. The scribes and Pharisees are quite genuinely shocked at the bad company the new Teacher keeps, the bad example He is setting, and remonstrate with His followers, who bring this unfavourable comment to His knowledge. That Jesus should have met it with the remark, " I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," is not likely, unless the words were uttered in irony ; otherwise, though genuinely His, they do not fit the occasion, where they would have been an admission that the Pharisees *were* truly righteous, and His companions sinners in comparison. On the contrary, if Jesus cultivated the society of these people from whom the Pharisees drew away their garments, it was because, with all their faults, He discerned in them some estimable, or at least lovable, features which made them superior to their orthodox critics. Is not this the plain lesson of His parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii. 9–14), and did He not fling in the face of chief priests and elders those terrible words, which may have done as much as anything to seal His fate—" The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you " (Matt. xxi. 31) ?

It has to be admitted that the Lord's action in consorting with what were deemed loose and irreligious characters was highly challenging ; and further trouble was to arise from the fact that His disciples, unlike those of John and the Pharisees, had not kept one of the fasts prescribed, if not by the Law, yet by the " tradition of the elders " (Mark ii. 18–22 ; Matt. ix. 14–17 ; Luke v. 33–39). We are not to understand that this particular incident followed quickly on the last, but rather that this was the *kind* of thing that kept cropping up. The Pharisees would argue that a rabbi professing to announce the Kingdom of God would, if he were sincere, observe and enjoin upon his

followers specially austere practices, as the Baptist had done. Jesus replies—and the retort is highly significant—that, for Him and His, fasting would be as incongruous as mourning for a bridegroom and the wedding guests.[1] That is to say, He beholds the Kingdom as so imminent that joy and not mourning is His, and His disciples', natural mood. We see how quickly Jesus had emancipated Himself from the gloom and asceticism of John—as a matter of fact, the monotonous call to repentance soon faded out from His preaching ; we see also the intensely eschatological character of His outlook—the dawn was already on the hills ; in a moment the golden splendour would flood the valleys.

The parables of the New Wine and the Piece of New Cloth, which close this episode in Mark (ii. 20–22), do not seem to fit the context ; they may represent Jesus' comment on His early attempts to proclaim His new message in the old environment of the synagogue, but this is mere conjecture.

Far more suited to the occasion—the question why He and His disciples did not observe the fasts as enjoined by the elders, and the protests of the scribes against His eating with sinners and publicans—is the little harangue, marked by an almost playful spirit, which in Matthew (xi. 16–19) and Luke (vii. 31–35) follows the incident of the Baptist's mission, where, however, they appear *mal à propos*. " Whereunto shall I liken this generation ? " the Lord asks, as this and that action of His are adversely criticized ; and He compares the critics to a parcel of perverse and disagreeable children who do not know their own minds, won't play *any* kind of game, whether it be weddings or funerals, resolved to object to whatever may be proposed. John had come fasting, and they had called him lunatic, demoniac ; now Jesus had come, making no professions of austerity, and they called him glutton, drunkard, boon-companion of the reprobate and dissolute. What was the use of trying to please such a settled disposition to grumble and find fault ? The foolish would exercise their folly, happen what might ; whereas wisdom was justified of those who were truly her children.

Suspect already on a variety of points, Jesus could not fail to come ere long into direct conflict with the dominant orthodoxy on the vital question of Sabbath observance. The lengths to which the rabbis went in defining what was and what was not lawful to be done on that day seem to us fantastic in their

[1] The words, " The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day," are evidently a later addition cast in the form of a prophecy ; Friday, the day of the Crucifixion, was, and is still, observed as a fast-day.

extravagance. Not merely all manual labour, but, *e.g.*, the writing of two consecutive letters of the alphabet—so long as they could be read as a syllable—constituted a breach of the Sabbath. No wonder that Jesus, judged by the standards of the scribes, was held to have countenanced such a breach on the part of His disciples who, going through a cornfield, had plucked some ears, and stilled their hunger by eating the ripe grains (Mark ii. 23–28 ; Matt. xii. 1–8 ; Luke vi. 1–5). In pointing to the alleged precedent of David and the showbreads, Jesus was probably merely answering a rabbi according to his rabbinism, for this was just the kind of non-natural interpretation of Scripture in which the scribes delighted. The disciples had plucked the corn on the Sabbath, not because they salved their consciences with " what David did," but because they were breathing the freer atmosphere of Jesus ; but the Old Testament quotation produced by Jesus on the spot may have been sufficient to silence scribedom.

The saying, " The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," which Mark alone gives us, occurs almost verbatim in the Talmud, and may have been a current phrase quoted by our Lord on this occasion, or even attributed to Him later on ; it is, in either case, a most significant protest against the spirit of legalism, which saw in the Law something quite independent of man's good. The added clause, " So that the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath," originally (*i.e.*, in the Aramaic) ran, and obviously meant, " So that *man*, etc.," the Aramaic *bar'nasha*, " son of man," being in common use for " man." (*Cf.* Ps. viii. 4, " What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? ")

The second dispute broke out in the synagogue itself over the question of Sabbath healing (Mark iii. 1–6 ; Matt. xii. 9–14 ; Luke vi. 6–11). This is only one of a number of similar occurrences recorded for us, Luke having, in addition to this story of the man with the withered arm, one about a woman suffering from spinal curvature (xiii. 10–17), and another about a man with the dropsy (xiv. 1–6), both of whom Jesus cured on a Sabbath. In each case the retort made by the Lord is so much on the same lines that we are perhaps dealing with variants of one original. No doubt these patients might just as well have waited a few hours longer for their relief ; in granting it there and then, Jesus purposely affirmed the principle that whatever is good to be done may be done on the Sabbath, and whatever is bad, neither on that day nor on any other. The credibility of this cure need not

detain us, as the tradition is plainly uncertain ; an addition to the story in the Gospel of the Hebrews has a certain human interest : " A mason was I," the sufferer is represented as saying, " and earned my living with my hands ; I pray thee, Jesus, to restore my health, that I may not have shamefully to beg for my food." The emotion of Jesus, and His grief at the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts, are described by Mark in graphic and lifelike fashion.

Naturally the traditionalists felt the provocative character of acts such as these, and probably they began to watch from an early date for an occasion which would warrant a formal charge being brought against Jesus ; it is less likely that they and the Herodians—the party devoted to the tetrarch[1]—should have commenced to plot even then for the Lord's destruction. The tendency to represent the countrymen of Jesus as conspiring against His life almost from the beginning of His ministry reaches its further development in the Fourth Gospel (John v. 16–18, vii. 19, 25, 30, 32, 44, viii. 20, 37, 40, 59, x. 31, 39) ; the probability is that there was no such plot until near the end of the Galilean ministry. Matthew, indeed, conveys the impression (xii. 15) that Jesus withdrew " from thence "—*i.e.*, from the synagogue at Capernaum—after the dispute about healing on the Sabbath, because He was aware of danger threatening Him ; but this view derives no support from Mark, and may be dismissed as an afterthought.

In relating the Lord's withdrawal to the sea, Mark tells us (iii. 7–12), with what one would judge a touch of exaggeration, that He was followed, not only by a great multitude from Galilee, but also by a vast concourse of people from Judæa and Jerusalem, from Idumæa and beyond Jordan, and even from the heathen territory of Tyre and Sidon. Luke vi. 17–49 introduces here that Sermon by the Sea which is his version of what appears in Matthew as the Sermon on the Mount—in reality, a collection of some of the best-known sayings of the Lord, and not a formal or consecutive address. The miscellaneous crowd which now surged round Him, and from which He had to save Himself in a little boat, lest they should mob Him, was in the main made up of elements little intent, if we may believe Mark's and Matthew's accounts, on being taught ; they wished either to be cured themselves, or had sick friends or relatives, or simply desired to witness deeds of healing, and, though it is certain that the great Sower lost no

[1] *Cf.* chap. xvi., p. 269 *n.*

opportunity of sowing the seed, most of it must have fallen upon stony ground, or upon thorns, or by the wayside. That Jesus found pleasure or satisfaction in this tumultuous activity we can as little believe as that the supposed demoniacs habitually hailed Him as the Son of God. What would have been the use of His charging them not to make Him known if they were doing it all the while?

Mark introduces at this point (iii. 22–30 ; *cf.* Matt. xii. 22–32 ; Luke xi. 14–22, xii. 10) another episode of conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities in which His antagonists are scribes who had come down from Jerusalem, evidently to watch and report on this alarming and heterodox movement. This fact in itself—the sending of a commission of inquiry from headquarters —as well as the vehement character of the collision, point to a later stage in the ministry of the Lord, when His affairs were tending towards a crisis, and will accordingly be treated in a subsequent chapter. The Evangelist is concerned to chronicle a number of occurrences of similar complexion one after another, with scant regard for chronological sequence ; in the present case we may be fairly sure that he antedates a dispute which did not belong to so early a phase.

Far more probable is Mark's allocation to this opening period of Jesus' public activity of a most painful incident, viz. the attempt made by His family, His mother and brothers, to take Him away by force as being beside Himself (Mark iii. 20, 21, 31-35 ; *cf.* Matt. xii. 46–50 ; Luke viii. 19–21). It would soon appear that His nearest did not understand Him and disapproved of the course on which He had embarked ; they were no doubt annoyed at His having given up His trade, which was perhaps a principal means of supporting the home ; they were genuinely alarmed at the rumours which reached them in out-of-the-way Nazareth, and resolved, for His own good, to remove Him from His present surroundings, and an activity which they thought was turning His brain.[1] All this was perfectly compatible with sincere and pained affection—they would say that He had got into a set of revivalists and faith-healers, who were doing Him no good ; but that such lack of comprehension must have bitterly hurt Jesus may be readily imagined. Knowing, or guessing, the object of His kinsfolk in seeking an interview with Him, He

[1] Not only is this episode left unmentioned by the other Evangelists, but in Codex Bezæ and all the Latin texts before Jerome's revision Mark iii. 21 is altered into, " And when *the scribes and the rest* heard about Him, *they* came forth to seize Him, for they said, *He is driving the people mad* "—a remarkable feat of textual manipulation.

refused to see them, and declared His only real family, His mother and brethren, to be those who were gathered around Him, and who were willing to do the will of God. Unquestionably, this is a harsh saying, but we have to remember the dire provocation under which it was uttered, the feeling of the greatest spiritual genius dubbed madman by His undiscerning relatives, together with the irresistible demand which He felt His vocation making upon Him to forgo all other bonds except those which His work was forging. We also have to remember that the ordinary domesticities were not compatible with the apocalyptic expectations which were the form, though not the content, of the Lord's thought. We know that He demanded from His disciples the resolute abandonment, if need be at a moment's notice, of all home ties, and He Himself made the sacrifice which He imposed on others. For that it *was* a sacrifice—that He loved those uncomprehending brothers, that kind, unseeing mother, of His —that His heart bled in pronouncing the rupture—we need not doubt ; only, He did pronounce it.

Thus we see Jesus, at the end, it may be, of a few weeks from His return into Galilee, launched fully upon His career ; idolized and execrated ; discussed by all, understood by none ; the centre of a commotion rather than the Head of a movement ; and in the heyday of His popularity exciting an ill-will which already pointed, albeit not clearly, forward to the death of the Cross. At no time was that career an "idyll" ; on the contrary, the stormy notes of its prelude indicated only too clearly what was to be its development and tragic issue.

But before we pursue the further course of the events that were now shaping themselves we shall have to render ourselves some account of the meaning, for Jesus Himself, of two of the terms we constantly encounter in the Gospels—the coming Kingdom and the Son of man.

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

"And Jesus went about in all Galilee," we read in Matt. iv. 23, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom." What was this good news, this message proclaimed and received with so much enthusiasm? We have seen what was the nature of the consummation to which the Lord's countrymen were looking forward, and what had been the character of the Baptist's ministry; we shall now have to ascertain more fully what the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom meant on the lips of Jesus.

I

When the modern Christian prays, "Thy Kingdom come," he thinks of the gradual approach of some "final reign of right," to be realized in the indefinitely distant future—some "far-off, Divine event to which the whole creation moves." When the original followers of the Lord repeated that petition, they and He thought of an immediately impending catastrophic event, the resumption by Yahveh of His Kingship over Israel, and so over the whole earth, which was regarded as under the dominion of ungodly powers, of Satan, "the prince of this world." It was the *nearness* of that event which the Baptist and Jesus alike proclaimed, and it was the sounding of *this* note which accounted for the immense stir their proclamation created. The coming of the Kingdom was not conceived as an evolutionary process culminating in a "crowning age of ages," nor as the ultimate outcome of the moral strivings of many generations, gradually abolishing evils and establishing righteousness; it was looked forward to as a sudden and purely supernatural change which God would bring about in His own good time, and which would be ushered in by the most tremendous upheavals in the realm of nature (Joel ii. 30, 31; *cf.* Mark xiii. 24, 25). It requires a very great effort on our part to enter into that conception, so remote from ours, and a still greater to accustom ourselves to the thought that this, and not ours, was our Lord's conception; yet, unless

we make that effort, the events which we are trying to reduce to order and intelligibility will remain largely chaotic and unintelligible for us.

We have had occasion to speak of the markedly pessimistic tinge which, from the days of the Captivity onwards, is found to colour Jewish thought and literature, expressing a feeling of God-forsakenness, the result of the people's sins. Israel was under a shadow, Yahveh had withdrawn His presence and favour from His disobedient nation, leaving it to adversaries to oppress. One hope lighted this darkness, namely, that in the fullness of time Yahveh would have mercy, and ascend once more the throne He had temporarily abandoned, scattering His people's enemies, and restoring their independence under His own sway and sceptre. Thus the great prophet of the Exile prays : " Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and Thy glory : where is Thy zeal and Thy mighty acts ? . . . Return for Thy servants' sake. . . . We are become as they over whom Thou never barest rule " (Isa. lxiii. 15–19 *passim*). Thus, too, in the time of our Lord, every pious Jew petitioned daily : " Bring back our judges as aforetime, and our counsellors as from the beginning ; cause sorrow and sighing to flee away from us, and be Thou King over us, even Thou alone, O Yahveh."

To promise a far-distant fulfilment of such urgent and instant prayers would have aroused little enthusiasm ; what drew the multitude to Jesus was the assurance He breathed that the Kingdom—the victory of God and the overthrow of Satan, which His hearers would interpret as the casting-off of the Roman yoke and the restoration of Israel's independence—was at the very doors. We shall not confound the eschatological form in which His message was delivered with the substance of that message ; but it has to be clearly recognized that as regards the outward shape and colour of His expectations Jesus was in close accord with the ideas current around Him. Unquestionably He looked for the new era in the immediate future ; there is no doubting the authenticity or mistaking the force of His confident prediction to the disciples, " Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come " (Matt. x. 23), and the same applies to the promise, " There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God " (Luke ix. 27 ; *cf.* Mark ix. 1 ; Matt. xvi. 28 ; also Mark xiii. 30 ; Matt. xxiv. 34 ; Luke xxi. 32). Even at His trial He told His judges, " Henceforth ye "—*i.e.*, you, my judges—" shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and

coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64), which, of course, meant the imminent advent of the Kingdom.

It is equally true that He depicted the blessedness to be enjoyed by the partakers in that consummation in perfectly realistic fashion; that He promised tangible, hundredfold reward to those who should make sacrifices for the Gospel's sake (Mark x. 30; Matt. xix. 29); that He told His disciples they should eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke xxii. 30; Matt. xix. 28)—a promise which goes some way to explain the request of the sons of Zebedee to sit on His right and left in that coming dispensation (Matt. xx. 21; Mark x. 35–37); and He Himself looked forward to drinking the fruit of the wine in the Kingdom of God (Mark xiv. 25). It would be an error to represent these features of His conception of that Kingdom as of the essence of His teaching regarding it; but, non-essential as they are, it would be worse than an error wilfully to ignore such elements.

Neither is it to be denied that His expectations regarding the Kingdom were, formally, limited to His own nation. He was conscious of a mission to none except the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. xv. 24), and forbade His disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles, or to enter into any city of the Samaritans (Matt. x. 5)—sayings unlikely to have been invented at a time when the Gentile mission was already in being; and towards the very end He pours out the passionate regret of His soul in the lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered Thy children together . . . and ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37).[1] Jesus, as a matter of fact, never effected a breach with His race, even though He knew the Scriptures well enough to consider the possibility of Israel being rejected, and its place given to another nation; indeed, such parables as those of the Two Sons (Matt. xxi. 28–32), the Wicked Husbandmen (Mark xii. 1–12; Matt. xxi. 33–43; Luke xx. 9–16), the Great Supper (Luke xiv. 15–24) and its variant, the Marriage Feast (Matt. xxii. 1–14), if they are authentic utterances of the Lord's, would seem to show that such a thought became increasingly frequent with Him as He grew more and more convinced of the unreceptiveness of the Jews for His message. For all that, He never went to any but His own people, and the Kingdom He preached was the supernatural restoration of the kingdom of *Israel*.

[1] Matt. xxviii., 19, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations," is obviously a late afterthought, as, had the Lord given such a command, there could never have been the official opposition there undoubtedly was to the activity of St. Paul.

II

It is all the more impressive to find how our Lord transcended these formal limitations of His thought concerning the Kingdom of God. Thus while, formally, He looked forward to the establishment by Divine intervention of an idealized Jewish theocracy, He has not one word to say on that favourite theme of His co-religionists, the Divine vengeance to be inflicted on the heathen. The vindictiveness which runs through so much of the apocalyptic thought of the age was as foreign to Him as the fevered dreams of world-dominion in which His countrymen indulged. If Judaism looked forward to a Messiah who should smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips (Isa. xi. 4), what interested Jesus was solely the Reign of God, a reign of righteousness and grace ; the political side of the Kingdom He left untouched, as of no importance to Him. Now it was just that political and secular side which loomed largest in the turbid imagination of His co-religionists, and it is at least a legitimate surmise that the non-political character of His preaching had not a little to do with the rapid waning of His popularity. To proclaim the glorious consummation as imminent—" nigh, even at the doors "—was to set every heart beating with anticipation ; but when it was found that His programme lacked the very items by which the people set most store, they turned from Him in disappointment. If we accept the statement of John vi. 15 that there was a movement on foot to make Jesus king by force, and that He would have nothing to do with the project, but escaped from the demonstrators, we shall have a still clearer view of the inevitableness of His failure : He was too great to succeed in the only way in which He could have won temporal success.

In the second place, we have only to ask whom He designates as the partakers of the coming Kingdom to discover that if the mould into which He ran His thought was inevitably eschatological, the precious metal that flowed into the mould was ethical and spiritual. Or one might say that He had none other than the already ageing wine-skins of eschatology to pour the new wine of His teaching into, and the wine quickly burst the skins ; but at this point the comparison would break down, for the wine was not lost. At the centre of all His thinking was the Fatherhood of God, and man's relation to the Father in heaven He ever conceived in ethical terms. They that should do the Father's will were the ones who should enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. vii. 21).

Those who were to partake of the Kingdom as He saw it were the pure in heart, the gentle, the spiritually poor—*i.e.*, receptive—the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, without any racial qualification; those who should be approved at the Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31–46)—the heirs of the Kingdom—were those who had practised kindness toward the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the prisoner, and nothing is said about their nationality; nay, He who had forbidden His emissaries to enter into any Samaritan city, drew, in answer to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the immortal picture of the "Good" Samaritan (Luke x. 30–37), as the model of all who would prove themselves deserving of heaven. It will be seen that the eschatological fetters sat as lightly upon Jesus as the withes upon the sleeping Samson; He was not even conscious of discarding them.

And in yet another respect we see Him as One who had already outgrown the limitations of the current conception of the Kingdom; for whereas that conception was *purely* futurist, Jesus was conscious as it were by flashes that the new order had already begun, was already "in the midst" (Luke xvii. 20, 21), while men were still waiting for its manifestation with pomp and circumstance. "The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you," He tells the Pharisees who question Him; and in that answer eschatology and apocalyptic imaginings are left behind. It is true that on one occasion He accounted for the consciousness that the Kingdom had actually commenced, by pointing to His success in casting out demons (Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20); but the inner assurance was there in the first place, and the explanation or confirmation of it came later. He felt that His personality was introducing a new factor into the world, which was no longer the same now that He had come. The Baptist He saw, for all his greatness, as still quite definitely belonging to the old order of things (Matt. xi. 11) which was passing away, whereas He Himself marked a fresh epoch, the daybreak of God's righteous reign. That glimpse was none the less true for being occasional and intermittent; in a manner past explaining, nor needing explanation, He knew that *by the fact of His coming* the threshold was already crossed, the new Dispensation begun. Such momentary experiences must have helped to quicken the Lord's messianic consciousness; for if the Kingdom was somehow here, and if He had somehow brought it, who then was He, who already knew Himself God's Well-beloved? The answer was

not yet fully formed in His mind ; nevertheless we may imagine His soul dimly prescient of what that answer would be.

III

We know now, in general outline, how the Kingdom of God presented itself in the mind of Jesus ; the question arises—and it is a most important question—*why* He should have harboured so strong a conviction of the nearness of that grand consummation, and, perhaps, *how near* He deemed it to be. The clue to the answer to these questions we believe to be in some words which at first sight seem more calculated to raise problems than to answer them ; the words, addressed by the Lord to the inner circle of His disciples, " *Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God*" (Mark iv. 11 ; *cf.* Matt. xiii. 11 ; Luke viii. 10). What is this mystery, the knowledge of which, we understand, is confined to a small knot of intimates, but withheld from the great multitude ?

The mere imminence of the Kingdom was, of course, no secret, but rather the key-note of both the Baptist's and our Lord's preaching. We hold, with Schweitzer, (*a*) that the secret referred to is none other than the ground of Jesus' assurance of that imminence, and possibly a hint as to the time when He looked for the fulfilment of His expectation ; and (*b*) that this " mystery " is contained in certain parables, the inner meaning of which the habitual intimates of Jesus might be trusted to penetrate, while the multitude could apprehend it only dimly, if at all.

Mark, followed by Matthew, relates a tradition, doubtless authentic, according to which Jesus on a certain day taught the crowd by the lake-side " many things in parables " (Mark iv. 2)—Himself seated in a boat, quite a short distance from the shore, while they are on the land ; and though the Evangelist breaks in upon these proceedings with the interlude of the disciples' query concerning the interpretation of the parable of the Sower, we can see that this interruption is out of place, and that Jesus continued to address His hearers till evening (*ib.* iv. 35). Now it is in connection with that day's teaching that Mark records the saying, spoken to the disciples, " Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God ; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables." Not all the parables related in this chapter are equally concerned with this " mystery " ; the Evangelist gives us neither all those nor only those which

were uttered on that occasion, the fact being that even in his day the "mystery" was no longer understood—as how could it be, seeing that it referred to the extreme nearness of an event which had not come to pass forty years after its prediction?

The principal parables setting forth the mystery of the Kingdom are those of the Sower, the Seed growing secretly, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven; the latter is given in Matt. xiii. 33 as following the parable of the Mustard Seed, to which it forms a companion picture, as that of the Seed growing secretly does to that of the Sower. If we can trace one strand of thought running through these, or find them linked in an unforced manner by one common principle, the mystery will grow clearer.[1]

What these four parables uniformly exhibit is the contrast between small causes and great effects; a hidden process set in motion by seemingly inadequate means, and the inevitable and disproportionately large results which supervene; in the first three the emphasis lies on seed-time and harvest, the day of small things and the season of surprising issues. As every year the grain is committed to the soil—a seemingly futile operation, did we not know better—so in that spring-time the Word was being sown, the momentous process was being initiated which would bring in the Kingdom with the same inevitableness, and presumably the same speed, with which the sowing of the seed leads on the harvest—a term which is elsewhere (Matt. xiii. 39) used metaphorically as signifying "the consummation of the age."[2] The generality of hearers, "they that are without," know only that Jesus is *announcing* the Kingdom; but those who are familiar with His mind are aware that He is Himself *bringing* it, *compelling its advent*—that is the mystery. As the farmer's sowing of the seed compels the earth to respond with her harvest of ripening corn, so the sowing of the Word, though much of the seed may come to nothing, will compel the heavenly harvest to ripen—invisibly, mysteriously, irresistibly—and the Kingdom to appear just about the time when the reapers on earth put forth their sickles. Some of the seed is sure to fall on good ground, and will bring forth abundantly; and once it is sown, the end is assured, and the sower may go home, sleep and rise, rise and sleep, for without further co-operation on his part the seed is growing in the dark soil, sending up first the blade, then the ear,

[1] For comment on the interpretation of the parable of the Sower in Mark iv. 14–20, Matt. xiii. 18–23, Luke viii. 11–15, see Appendix to this chapter.

[2] Mark iv. 29, "But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come," is a reminiscence of an eschatological passage, Joel iii. 13.

then the full corn in the ear. The sower "knoweth not how" the growth proceeds, but that is immaterial, since the result is pre-ordained. Man's part seems exiguous in proportion to earth's mysteriously large response; the little leaven mysteriously pervades and alters the nature of the whole lump; the little grain of mustard seed mysteriously grows into a shrub ten feet high; *the little movement now in progress must issue in the Kingdom of God—there is the mystery.*

IV

But how could Jesus connect, and so intimately connect, His preaching with the coming Kingdom, as cause with effect? And if He did so, was He not, as a result of His eschatological prepossessions, the victim of a tragic delusion, since the Kingdom certainly did not come as and when He expected it? Such a conclusion, though it might be impatiently put forward, would only amount to ignoring the golden treasure of His thought because of the eschatological earthen vessel containing it.

For the all-important element in the thought of Jesus concerning the Kingdom was not that the new era was quite close at hand, but that it was to be brought in by the sowing of the Word, by the quickening agency of human effort, and effort of a certain kind—palpably inadequate as such an instrument might seem to accomplish such a result. It is a total mistake to point to the parable of the Seed growing secretly as showing that in His view man could only wait passively for the Kingdom, as the farmer did for the corn; on the contrary, the farmer, by his seemingly insignificant act, as we have seen, *made* the earth yield her increase, compelled the corn to rise from the ground. Jesus was not at all a passive character; that He declined a political *rôle* and the futility of armed insurrection must not make us think of Him as averse to the most strenuous exertion which He thought would bring in the Kingdom

If we ask what kind of exertion this could be, we find the answer in Matt. xi. 12, where He declares that "from the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." This, in accordance with the conventional conception of our Saviour as a calm, serene sage, has been taken as a rebuke to those ardent spirits who would not wait, but meant to realize their aspirations by a supreme effort: in truth, it expressed the very opposite of a rebuke, which the words do not so much as imply, and it would

be truer to say that even if Jesus did not approve of all the methods of these men, He sympathized warmly with their zealous, activist disposition. The Kingdom of God was to be forced on, pressure was to be brought to bear which would compass the great end—*and this process had been going on since the days of John the Baptist, i.e.*, for the last year or two. That process consisted in a passionate return to God—that is the meaning of the term rendered in our Gospels by μετάνοια, " repentance "—and a moral renewal. It was this which the Baptist had preached (Luke iii. 8–14), this, we may surmise, which had drawn Jesus so mightily to him. Repentance, and fruits worthy of repentance, were to compel the Kingdom to appear, and that speedily.

This idea is not unrelated to, yet sharply differentiated from, what was held by the professedly religious of His day. They too believed that the Kingdom lingered because the people were sinful. To the Pharisee this meant that the Law was not being observed with anything like sufficient strictness ; it was a saying recorded in the Talmud that Israel would be redeemed if the nation would keep only two Sabbaths as the Sabbath should be kept. That, of course, was a mere caricature of the prophets' view that Israel was out of favour with Yahveh because of its disobedience and backsliding, but that Yahveh would return to His people when they sanctified themselves, and turned to Him ; this prophetic conviction Jesus instinctively adopts. This is the point where His ethical enthusiasm coalesces with, and transforms, His eschatological hopes ; He preaches the nearness of the Kingdom, but preaches it as a consummation to be reached by a resolute moral regeneration, a vehement, passionate willingness to surrender all, sacrifice all, and so to achieve that worthiness of the Kingdom upon which the Kingdom itself would follow with the same inevitableness as harvest follows seed-time. That explains the touch of " violence " which meets us in so many of His demands, the absolutism of His moral code, which admits of no qualifying circumstances : only " by force," by the utmost moral energy, is the Kingdom to be taken—and how immeasurably does the prize transcend our highest effort to attain it, as the pearl of great price is far more valuable than all the merchant pays for it, though what he pays is his all !

This, then, we take to have been the grandiose conception of the Lord, His plan to call the Kingdom into being quickly, immediately, with power ; not by a quietism, waiting with folded hands, but by a heroic ethic, ready for the cross, by the most implicit obedience to God's will, was the Golden Age to

be brought in. It is open to us to see the essential truth of this conception, and its independence of those mere garments of eschatology which speedily dropped from it. For it is a fact of experience that the Kingdom—the Sovereignty—of God can always be realized by the individual soul which acknowledges and obeys Him as its Sovereign; while every one who seeks with sincerity to do His will is conscious of working for the advent of His Kingdom on earth. That that consummation did not appear *when* Jesus expected it, is a detail; that it can and will come only *in the way* He expected it, matters everything. Not in one glorious burst, but little by little, not along the lines of catastrophe, but of evolution, will the more perfect human society, with God as its Blessed and Only Potentate, be established; but the method of its establishment is and will be that proclaimed and enjoined by Jesus Christ—moral regeneration, rightness of motive prompting rightness of conduct.

V

But did our Lord really anticipate such a return and renewal to be effected on the part of all and sundry, and that so rapidly that the grand climax would be reached by the time of the approaching harvest? He entertained no such extravagant anticipations; for here we touch the very core of the mystery of the Kingdom.

We have to remember that it is the relatively small proportion of the seed falling on the good ground which produces the abundant harvest; it is the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump; it is the little grain of mustard seed which grows into so imposing a plant—or, according to an ingenious conjecture of the original meaning of the parable, which by its pungency alters the whole flavour of the dish; and it was the small number of men of violence—let us substitute "passion"—the spiritual *élite* intent upon the one aim, whose efforts would "take the Kingdom by force": there was the mystery.

In this idea—the salvation of all Israel, not by its own merits, but by the availing merits of a pious and God-pleasing remnant—we perceive a reminiscence from Isaiah (i. 9); and the prophet, in turn, shows that he is inspired by the ancient and beautiful story of Abraham's pleading with Yahveh, and how the cities of the Plain might have been saved from the destruction they deserved, had there been but ten righteous persons in them. In the same way Jesus, though leagues removed from the bitter

contempt of the Pharisees for the common people,[1] felt almost from the outset that the success of His enterprise, *i.e.*, the coming of the Kingdom, was not dependent upon the acceptance of His message by the masses: that aim was to be attained *for all* by the consecrated efforts of *a few*, the vehement lovers of God and His righteousness. From this it was a comparatively short step to the conclusion that the end would be realized by the complete self-sacrifice of One, of a Suffering Servant of the Lord, by whose stripes His brethren were to be healed.

And here once more we see all history vindicating the spiritual intuition of our Lord. For the redemption of the race, the healing of the world's ills, the sweeping away of its abuses, is the achievement, not of the great mass of careless humanity, but of the chosen band, few in number, who are consumed by their zeal for the Lord's house, the leaven which leavens our dullness and indifference; of the men and women whose heart is so inflamed by the wrong that round them lies, by the vision of the good to be won, that they are determined to perish themselves if that is the only way by which the Kingdom can be brought nearer, following in the footsteps of Him who for the joy that was set before Him—to win the Kingdom for mankind—endured the Cross, despising shame. It is the supreme sacrifices of supreme souls which abound unto the salvation of the world, and prove "a ransom for many" who are not even conscious of what has been done and suffered for their unworthy sakes.

In anticipating the advent of the Kingdom in the imminent future, whether within the year or within the lifetime of His generation, Jesus was influenced by the ideas of His age; in pointing to the method and agency by which alone the goal could be won, He declared a central mystery which is also a vital truth, and which every age and every soul may verify anew. When the love of goodness becomes a passion—not an academic approbation, but a dynamic violently struggling into life—then, and not till then, redemption draweth nigh, and the Kingdom is "in the midst."

[1] *Cf.* John vii. 49, "This multitude which knoweth not the Law are accursed."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

In putting forward an interpretation of the parable of the Sower which happens to accord with the general theory of the mystery of the Kingdom as developed in the preceding pages, we may seem to have shown scant respect for quite another and authoritative interpretation which holds the field, being that which according to the Synoptics (Mark iv. 13–20 ; Matt. xiii. 18–23 ; Luke viii. 11–15) was given to the disciples by Jesus Himself in answer to their request.[1] Our defence is that although this explanation has many beauties of its own, it is almost certainly not authentic, but represents the reflections of a generation following that of Jesus upon a well-remembered utterance of His. It is characteristic of the genuine parables of our Lord that they set forth in picturesque guise some one general thought or principle ; the idea that every detail they contain is to be separately interpreted, is quite foreign to the nature of these graphic tales and illustrations, and would remove them from the category of parables to that of allegories. In the parable of the Sower Jesus simply contrasts the seed which bore fruit with that which for various reasons did not ; and the tale He tells is so plain that none of His hearers would have expressed a wish to have it unfolded like an allegorical puzzle. Those who were present could never have imagined that this story needed a point-by-point explanation, and the latter has, as a matter of fact, a certain air of artificiality ; it is an afterthought, and belongs, not to the open air, but to the study—a product of the same tendency which in Judaism was unable to read any Old Testament passage in its plain meaning, but allegorized even the most obvious statements. That is not to deny the value of this particular interpretation ; only, when we note that whereas Jesus had spoken of different kinds of *soil*, the explanation distinguishes between different kinds of *seed*, we may feel fairly certain that it is not *His* explanation. Such things were bound to happen when the words of the Lord were repeated in surroundings widely different from those in which they had been uttered, and when no doubt many a scribe who had been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii., 52) brought forth out of his treasure things new and old, applying his old method of exegesis to the new message of the Gospel.

This was the more likely to occur when, as soon came to be the case, the early Christian community, predominantly composed of gentiles, began to wonder why Jesus should have employed this particular method of teaching. We may take it that the question, " Why speakest thou unto them in parables ? " (Matt. xiii. 10) was never addressed to the Lord by His disciples, but expresses the feeling of a later age, and that the answer to that question, read as a whole, does not represent His mind. The disciples would not have asked Him why He taught in parables, because they knew quite well : the parable is a concrete way of teaching, eminently suitable to the simple folk who formed the bulk of our Lord's

[1] On these private explanations to the disciples, see chap. x., p. 115.

audiences, and easily comprehended by them ; they liked parables precisely as children like stories, and are best reconciled to moral lessons when they are in story-form.

But a later generation arose which looked everywhere for hidden meanings, and thought these picture-stories of Jesus, with their homeliness and raciness, specially full of hinted secrets ; why, then, these people asked, should He have communicated His teachings in the shape of such dark riddles ? Then it was remembered that He had spoken of the " mystery " of the Kingdom ; and it was assumed, incredible as such a misunderstanding sounds to us, that He deliberately used the parable as an instrument for concealing His meaning, so as to prevent the people from understanding the saving truths He uttered. Mark iv. 12 carries this travesty of the Master's thought much further than Matt. xiii. 13 : " Unto them that are without," Jesus is made to say, " all things are done in parables, that seeing, they may see and not perceive ; and hearing, they may hear and not understand ; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them." That Jesus should have uttered such a sentiment is simply incredible ; He may have used this quotation from Isaiah (vi. 9), and applied it on some occasion to dull and inert hearers, but certainly not as expressing His *intention*. That He should have deliberately framed His message so as to prevent its being understood, and the people who heard it from being saved, is a supposition which is not only untrue to all we know of His mind, but also to the character of His parables which were essentially not enigmas cunningly framed to bewilder and mislead. That such parables as those of the Sower, the Seed growing in secret, the Grain of Mustard Seed, and the Leaven, contained an inner meaning, which His intimates would apprehend better than the populace, is true ; but that the outer garb was intended to *conceal* the Master's thought from the minds of the multitude, so as to deprive them of the forgiveness that might else have been theirs, is the misunderstanding of a period which had lost the simplicity of those earliest hearers of the Lord's whom He taught " many things in parables."

It may be asked how the nascent Church came to credit Jesus with the purpose of misleading His own countrymen, those to whom He Himself testified that He was sent. The answer must be sought in a fact which deeply perplexed the primitive Christian community, viz. the Lord's rejection at the hand of His own people, whose was the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose were the fathers, and of whom was Christ as concerning the flesh (Rom. ix. 4, 5). They had passionately awaited God's Anointed, yet when He came unto His own, His own received Him not (John i. 11). If such an incredible thing had come to pass, the answer ran, it must have been part of God's own determinate counsel that it should be so, and God Himself must have hardened the hearts of the Jewish nation, as He had hardened the heart of Pharaoh ; it was His merciful design that the Gospel should go to the gentiles—that was why the Jews were *made* to spurn the Divine gift, viz. in order that the gentiles should benefit by it. That, in effect, is the Apostle's argument in Rom. ix.–xi., an argument which, desperate as it was, had for its object to allay the perplexity of the early Church. It followed that when Jesus preached the Gospel to His countrymen, they were not meant to understand it, " lest they should turn," and that was the reason why He taught in parables,

in dark and riddling speech, which was only for those to understand to whom had been given the mystery of the Kingdom.

The true reason for the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Christ was far simpler; they repudiated Him, not because they could not understand His parables, nor because they were intended *not* to understand them, but because He was not the Restorer of the monarchy whom they expected, and because a crucified Messiah was to them a contradiction in terms, as St. Paul knew when he wrote, " We preach Messiah crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock " (1 Cor. i. 23). There lay the sufficient explanation; we need look for no other.

CHAPTER VI

"WHO IS THIS SON OF MAN?"

To the average reader of the Gospels this question of the multitudes (John xii. 34) is merely an example of that wilful stupidity which the Fourth Evangelist so frequently lays to the charge of "the Jews"—a failure to understand what is plain and obvious, due to a defect, not so much of intelligence as of good will. The Son of man is, of course, the Messiah, the Christ; Jesus is the Christ; when therefore Jesus speaks of the Son of man, He speaks of Himself, and claims to be, or rather states that He is, the Christ—nothing could be simpler.

Starting with this settled assurance, our average reader of the Gospels passes over, without bewilderment or even curiosity, a number of exceedingly complicated problems, of which his too-great familiarity with the text has rendered him unaware, though they fairly clamour for consideration. So important are these problems, and so much depends on the answers which we shall give to them, that before continuing our narrative we shall have to try to state and solve them, as an indispensable preliminary to an understanding of the events which we have set out to trace.

No one perusing our records intelligently and for the first time, with a simple desire to obtain a clear view of the story they tell, could help asking himself how it is that the Evangelists represent our Lord as habitually speaking of Himself in the third person; no such student could fail to notice that while some of these references tell us of the Son of man as already come, others, and these the larger number, point to His appearance as imminent but not yet realized. If "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke xix. 10; *cf.* Matt. xviii. 11, R.V. marg.); if He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28), how are we to understand such a question as this—"When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). What of the frequent predictions by our Lord of the coming—not the return—of "the Son of man on the clouds of heaven with power and great

glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30) or "in the glory of His Father with His angels," when He will "render unto every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27)? What is he to make of such a puzzling statement as the following—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of *Me* and *My* works in this adulterous and sinful generation, *the Son of man* also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh" Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; *cf.* Luke xii. 8, 9), where the Speaker, so far from implying His identity with the Son of man, suggests rather the contrary?

Can we be certain of the meaning of the term which our sacred writers place with such frequency upon the lips of the Saviour? Can we be reasonably assured that He used it in every instance in which we find it reported that He did so? Or that, where He did so, He was invariably referring to Himself? If "Son of man" is, as is generally assumed, the equivalent of "Christ," and if in designating Himself by that title Jesus was making a messianic claim, is it not strange that such a claim should be couched in such a form—oblique, indirect, inferential? Could He have adopted this form of speech practically from the beginning (Mark ii. 10, 28), in order to assert His Messiahship, seeing that He is said again and again to have declined messianic appellations (Luke iv. 41 and *passim*), and that prior to Peter's confession the fact of His being the Christ was supposed to have been quite unknown even to the disciples (Matt. xvi. 17), while even after that confession "He charged them that they should tell no man of Him" (Mark viii. 30)?

In attempting to thread our way through this maze, it is well to have a fixed point from which we may start, a solid fact which no legitimate criticism can dissolve. Such a fixed point we find in the certainty that *at some time and in some manner our Lord must have allowed it to be believed*—we are purposely putting it no higher than this—*that the current messianic expectations of His people were to find their fulfilment in Him.* Why must He have done so? Because the belief in His Messiahship meets us on the very threshold of Christianity, informs the earliest writings of the New Testament; and such a belief, though it might have survived the catastrophe of the Cross, or revived after that apparent failure, could not have sprung into existence after the Lord's death, and in spite of that failure, if it had not existed during His lifetime, and with His sanction. A crucified Messiah was to the Jews a contradiction in terms: the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah could not have been born *after* Calvary, but could only

have persisted through that tragedy, reinforced, no doubt, by the disciples' Easter experiences. The followers of our Lord were firmly persuaded that their Master was the Christ; and if they held that persuasion while He was still with them, it could only be because He had authorized it.

We have, as a matter of fact, a precise account of the circumstances under which their assurance of His Messiahship found expression and received His sanction, viz. in the account of Peter's confession, an incident which does not lie open to doubt on any tenable grounds; nor is it possible to explain His condemnation by the Roman authorities except on the charge that He had claimed to be the Messiah, a claim which was almost without exception understood to be a bid for the Jewish throne—hence the inscription upon the Cross, "The King of the Jews." Such a charge could not so much as have been credibly preferred against Him, let alone substantiated, had He not—again we purposely use the least emphatic mode of statement—let His Messiahship be understood.

In what manner did He do so? It is evident that He never made an explicit declaration to that effect, if we except the isolated testimony of Mark xiv. 62, which is not exactly borne out by the parallel passage in Matt. xxvi. 64, and still less by Luke xxii. 68. But if He did not say in one word, "I am the Christ," He could have produced precisely the same effect by referring to Himself under one or the other of the current messianic titles, viz. as the Son of God, or the Son of David, or the Son of man. At each of these three appellations we must now glance in turn.

"Son of God" was certainly a well-understood title of the Messiah, and our earliest Gospel uses it in its opening line to describe our Lord. It did not, however, in its ordinary usage, bear the sense of an actual *descent* from God by generation, but was in the first place an attribute of kingship, and as such customary alike in Egypt and Babylonia, where the king was regarded as God's son by adoption. The same idea had in due course made its appearance in Israel, even down to the Deity's promise of world-dominion to His elect. Thus in the second Psalm the poet represents Yahveh as addressing a king of Israel as follows: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This is the flattery of a court-poet bestowed upon a minor prince; the later Jews, however, after their return from the Exile, saw in it a

messianic prophecy, and when they spoke of the Son of God they meant the coming Messiah, who should restore Israel's ancient splendour and exercise world-wide rule. Now Jesus, in His baptismal experience, had certainly received such an intuition of unique intimacy with God as He could clothe only in the formula of Divine Sonship, and interpret in terms of a unique mission laid upon Him ; and it is entirely intelligible that the associations which clung to the phrase " Son of God " presented themselves to Him at first as a temptation—the dream of ruling all the kingdoms of the world. But He repelled that thought as a Satanic suggestion—repudiating, *i.e.*, the political meaning of Divine Sonship—and as a matter of fact He is never reported as having used the term when speaking of Himself. We may take it that this was the initial problem with which our Lord had to grapple after His baptism, viz., in what sense He was the Son of God,[1] since He did not feel in the least that such a title applied to Him in the obvious, messianic meaning attached to it by the age. We may hazard the guess that if He refrained from referring to Himself as the Son of God, it was not only because to do so would have been a kind of profanation of what was to Him a holy of holies, but also on account of the uncongenial political connotation of the phrase. It would have been falsely understood as a claim to earthly sovereignty ; and such a thought was far from our Lord's mind.

If, then, Jesus avoided even a term like Son of God, for the reasons just stated, it is easy to understand how much less in harmony with His temper and outlook would be the popular messianic designation, " Son of David." This, indeed, was the " conquering hero " of Jewish nationalism, the Messiah, if we may so express it, of the man in the street, the warlike deliverer who would execute terrible vengeance upon the foreign oppressor. " And all the multitudes were amazed," we read—viz. at Jesus' power over disease—" and said, Is this the Son of David ? " (Matt. xii. 23.) " Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me " (Mark x. 47), is the cry of the blind beggar at Jericho. " Blessed is the coming Kingdom, the Kingdom of our father David," the crowds are reported as calling out when Jesus enters Jerusalem (Mark xi. 10), and " Hosanna to the Son of David " is the acclamation of the children in the Temple, according to Matt. xxi. 15. Obviously, such salutations could only have a messianic meaning ; just as for the early Christians it followed that since Jesus was the Messiah, He must be descended from Israel's hero-king, " a shoot

[1] *Cf.* chap. iii., pp. 54 ff.

out of the stock of Jesse" (Isa. xi. 1). But again it is noteworthy that our Lord, so far as the Gospels tell us, never uses this title as applying to Himself; on the contrary, we read how in Jerusalem He publicly disputed the contention of the scribes that the Messiah must be descended from David (Mark xii. 35–37; Matt. xxii. 41–46; Luke xx. 41–44), on the ground that David, to whom the opinion of the time ascribed the authorship of Ps. cx., could not have hailed one of his own descendants as Lord. The question of the origin of the Psalm, and its supposed messianic meaning, need not occupy us here; the important thing to notice is that our Lord, so far from accepting what was implied in the title "Son of David," repudiated the whole conception of the Messiah which that title embodied. The cause of His doing so is obvious enough: the nationalist hopes of which this was the watchword were altogether alien to what He regarded as His true mission.

But while Jesus is not recorded to have spoken of Himself on any occasion as either the Son of God or the Son of David, we cannot turn many pages of the Synoptics without coming upon His reported use of the phrase "The Son of man"; and the frequency with which this term appears upon His lips is thrown into relief by the fact that with one sole exception (Acts vii. 56) it never reappears in the rest of the New Testament outside the Gospels, is never applied to our Lord by anyone but Himself. It has, indeed, been attempted by Lietzmann and Wellhausen as well as Nath. Schmidt to find in the non-use of the term by other New Testament writers than the Evangelists indirect support for the view that it was not used by our Lord either, *i.e.*, not in a messianic sense; but a reconstruction of the Gospel history which deletes from it the claim of Jesus to Messiahship will commend itself to few on its merits. And though the eighty-one instances in which the title is used in the Gospels obviously do not refer to anything like as many separate occasions—of thirty "Son of man" passages in Matthew only nine are without parallels in Mark or Luke or both—yet we are left with the distinct impression that the words were of frequent use in our Lord's mouth; that if they formed a self-designation, this was His chosen form of self-designation, His favourite mode of indicating Himself; and again, that if they were a recognized messianic title, His use of them in reference to Himself was an explicit claim to be the Messiah. And thus we come back to the puzzling questions with which we started, viz. why Jesus, if He

was not at all anxious to be known as the Messiah (Mark viii. 30 ; Matt. xvi. 20 ; Luke ix. 21), should have frequently described Himself by a self-revealing term ; why He should have adopted so strange a form of speech as these references to Himself in the third person ; and why, if it was known from His more or less habitual use of this self-designation prior to Cæsarea Philippi—Matthew records nine such occasions before that juncture—Peter's confession should have been felt to mark so important a point. Once more, " Who is this Son of man ? "

The most varied theories have been put forward to account for the Lord's employment of such a self-designation, and its meaning ; some suggesting that He intended it to denote His human as distinguished from His Divine nature ; others that He Himself invented the term in its messianic sense as an alternative to the current titles, Son of God and Son of David, for the Messiah ; others, again, that His use of this particular phrase was due to a wish to let it be understood that He preferred to emphasize His lowly estate—" an intentional veiling of the messianic character under a title which affirms the humanity of Him who bore it " ; or that by the Son of man was meant the man *par excellence*, the ideal man ; it has even been suggested that when speaking of Himself in the third person He probably employed some explanatory gesture indicating who was meant. Most of these theories, however, are altogether too artificial to stand scrutiny ; and their plausibility varies in inverse proportion to their elaborateness.

As for the ever-recurring notion that our Lord, by calling Himself the Son of man, laid stress upon His simple, humble humanity, it is enough to point out that the Son of man of whom He speaks is a celestial Being, coming in the glory of His Father with His angels, or sitting at the right hand of God, and not at all a lowly personage.

From these various hypotheses we turn to what is generally accepted as the fixed point reached by modern criticism of our problem, viz. that the term Son of man as a designation of the Messiah is to be traced to Dan. vii., where the writer, after describing the four great beasts which he had seen coming up from the sea, proceeds as follows :

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even unto the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (vii. 13, 14).

The connection between this passage and the references in the Synoptics to the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven (Mark xiv. 62; Matt. xxvi. 64; *cf.* Luke xxii. 69; Mark xiii. 26; Matt. xxiv. 30; Luke xxi. 27) is plain and unmistakable. It is true that in Daniel the reference is not to the Messiah but to the representative of an ideal Israel, possibly to Michael, Israel's guardian angel; but ere long the words were reinterpreted as a messianic prophecy, and the Son of man became a messianic title. As such it meets us in the Similitudes of Enoch, a Jewish apocalypse written in the first century B.C., where the Son of man is, *e.g.*, prophetically introduced as the chosen of the Lord of spirits, the one who hath righteousness, he to whom the sum of judgment is committed, and the light of the gentiles. Attempts to show that the "Son of man" passages in Enoch are Christian interpolations have proved unconvincing, if only for the reason that a Christian interpolator would assuredly have gone further. "The view of the Messiah presented," says Schürer, "is perfectly explicable on Jewish grounds. . . . Nothing of a specifically Christian character is to be met with in any of this section." If, then, by the time of our Lord, "Son of man" had acquired a distinctly messianic meaning, it follows that wherever it was actually used by Jesus, it was used in that sense, and that whenever He applied that appellation to Himself, He asserted His Messiahship—which is precisely what the Evangelists understood, and wished to convey to their readers.

This conclusion, however, as every student of the question knows, has recently been assailed on linguistic grounds. It is vigorously contended that the Aramaic original of the term rendered "son of man" in our Gospels, viz. *bar' nasha*, though literally meaning "son of man," had in the age of Jesus lost that significance for good, and come to stand simply for "man," "some one," "any one"; that therefore in the genuine passages where our Lord used the expression *bar' nasha*, He did not refer to the Son of man, or make any messianic claim, while those in which the meaning obviously constitutes such a claim are dismissed as unauthentic. Such a contention would be alarming if the verdict of philology on the point involved were at all unanimous;

but while Lietzmann maintains that Jesus never used the term "Son of man" concerning Himself or in a messianic sense, if only because such a messianic title did not and could not exist in Aramaic, and while Nath. Schmidt declares that "If Jesus used *bar' nasha*, as no Semitic scholar doubts, He can have understood by it only 'man,'" Dalman and Charles repudiate these contentions. Dalman denies that the Aramaic word under debate properly belonged to the common language of the Palestinian Jews as a term for "man," and Charles remains unshaken in his conviction that our Lord used it as a self-designation and a messianic title. Though not in regular use in that sense, Dalman argues, the term *bar enasha* on the lips of Jesus would recall to His hearers the similar scriptural expression in Dan. vii. 13, *chebar' enosh*, "like unto a son of man," "where *bar' enosh* denotes a definite personality, which, further, Jewish exegesis sometimes identified explicitly with the Messiah."

To these arguments of scholarship a consideration drawn from common sense may be added with due caution: whatever the Aramaic term used by our Lord, or whatever the current meaning of *bar' nasha*, we shall find it difficult to believe that the Aramaic language offered no facilities for expressing so simple an idea as "son of man," or that Jesus could not have clothed that idea in words of His native speech if He wished to do so. The expression "Son of man" may not have been in anything like as common use for the Messiah as "Son of God" or "Son of David," but it would certainly be understood in a messianic sense where such a sense was intended; and if we have correctly interpreted the reasons which made Jesus refrain from using the two more popular titles, we can also understand His motive in fixing upon a designation which was at any rate freer from nationalist and political associations, and which, moreover, pointed only to a *future* Messiahship, to be realized by One who at the time was to all appearance a man, *bar' nasha*, among men.

Nevertheless, when we turn to the question at what stage in His ministry our Lord began to employ this phrase in its specific significance, and thus to the more detailed examination of its occurrence in the Synoptics, we shall arrive at the conclusion (1) that He certainly did not do so from the very beginning; (2) that in some of the passages where the term is found we are dealing with a literal rendering of an original which was intended to mean "man," and not "the Son of man"; (3) that there was a tendency on the part of tradition to substitute the latter

expression for an original "I"; (4) that not all the utterances which report the Lord as speaking of the Son of man's advent are necessarily authentic; and (5) *that not in all those passages that are genuine is the term "Son of man" to be taken as a self-designation* during His lifetime. Let us look at these in order.

(1) That Jesus could not have proclaimed Himself the future Messiah from the beginning of His public activity is rendered sufficiently plain by considerations which we have urged already. We believe, indeed, that in the opening stage of His preaching He simply reiterated the Baptist's message, the call to repentance in view of the impending Judgment, and the nearness of the Kingdom of God. But we know also that He rebuked those unbalanced nervous sufferers who hailed Him as the Son of David, and that even after Peter's confession—marking as it did an entirely new phase—He imposed strict silence upon the disciples. A meticulous regard for chronological accuracy is not a strong point of any of our Synoptists, and any ante-Cæsarean instances of the use of a messianic title by Jesus in reference to Himself, if authentic, must be regarded as misplaced, since it is impossible that our Lord should have used such a title at a time when His Messiahship was not known even in the circle of His closest intimates.

(2) Now it is significant that among the most undoubted instances of our Lord's use of this phrase there are some which render it certain that, so far from speaking of the Son of man, He made statements about mankind, about the rights, privileges, and estates of man *qua* man. Such is the saying in Mark ii. 10 and its parallels concerning the power of the Son of man to forgive sins, where the context makes it clear that the principle which Jesus was vindicating was the right of man, *bar' nasha*, and not merely of God alone, as the scribes contended, to exercise such forgiveness. Such, again, is the pronouncement in Mark ii. 28 about the Son of man being lord even of the Sabbath: it was the disciples, not Jesus, whose action was in dispute, and from the axiom, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," the only possible inference was that man as such, and not only the Son of man, was above the Sabbath. Still more instructive is the saying in Matt. xii. 32 (*cf.* Luke xii. 10), "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him." Our earliest witness, Mark, has a variant which makes no mention of the Son of man, but

says, " All their sins shall be forgiven unto *the sons of men* . . : but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness " (iii. 28). Obviously this is the original form of the saying, and the unusual reference to the sons of men has been transformed into one to the Son of man, the result being to change the whole purport of the Lord's utterance. Finally, if the saying recorded in Matt. viii. 20, Luke ix. 58, " The foxes have holes," etc. belongs to the ante-Cæsarean period, it is at least conceivable that Jesus spoke of man, the most naturally defenceless of beings, and not of the Son of man, as not having where to lay his head, a condition of indigence which no one associated with the Messiah.

(3) Indeed, the last-quoted instance may be one of those in which the place of an original " I " was taken by the phrase " the Son of man," once the latter had come to be regarded as the habitual self-designation of our Lord. That this tendency was at work is clear from a comparison of parallel passages in the Synoptics. Thus, *e.g.*, where Matt. v. 11 reads, " Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you . . . for *My* sake," Luke vi. 22, has " for the *Son of man's* sake." Where Matt. x. 33 says, " Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will *I* also deny before My Father which is in heaven," Luke xii. 8, reads, " Every one who shall confess *Me* before men, him shall the *Son of man* also confess before the angels of God." For Mark viii. 27, (*cf.* Luke ix. 18), " Who do men say that *I* am ? " Matt. xvi. 13 substitutes the quite incredible, " Who do men say that the *Son of man* is ? " Mark x. 45, Matt. xx. 28, " The *Son of man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," has its parallel in Luke xxii. 27, " *I* am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Mark viii. 31, Luke ix. 22, " The *Son of man* must suffer many things," has for its equivalent Matt. xvi. 21, " From that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that *He* must . . . suffer many things." With such cases as these actually before us, it is a legitimate inference that there are others besides these where our Lord had said " I " and " Me," and where " the Son of man " represents a less authentic report. This does not exclude the possibility that in some instances the reverse process took place.

(4) A large proportion of the most explicit and picturesque references to the coming of the Son of man occurs in the eschatological discourse which occupies Mark xiii., Matt. xxiv., Luke xvii. 22–37, xxi. 5–36. There is no need for enumeration ; no fewer than four of these vivid predictions are to be found in

Luke xvii. 22–30. But the authenticity of this eschatological discourse as a whole is the reverse of assured, the view which has gained most ground in recent years being that it is a composite production, made up of a Jewish broad-sheet which originated and circulated shortly before the siege and capture of Jerusalem, together with some genuine utterances of our Lord's.[1] There appears no reason *per se* why Jesus should not at some time have delivered Himself of sayings like the following: "As the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in His day. . . . And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. . . . Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; . . . after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed" (Luke xvii. 24–30; *cf.* Matt. xxiv. 27, 37–39). What is quite unlikely, on the other hand, if these sayings are authentic, is that Jesus, when He pronounced them, identified Himself with the Son of man whose sudden coming they predict.

(5) The same reason applies, finally, to a small but extremely important group of utterances, in which we can have no doubt that it is the voice of the Lord Himself that is speaking of the Son of man and His imminent advent, yet in such a manner as raises an acute problem. The sayings in question are these:

Verily, I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come (Matt. x. 23).

In an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh (Matt. xxiv. 44; Luke xii. 40).

When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke xviii. 8).

Everyone who shall confess me before men, Him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God (Luke xii. 8).

Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark viii. 38; *cf.* Luke ix. 26).

Looking at the first two of these sayings, their genuineness is guaranteed by the very fact of their insertion and retention in the Gospel record, seeing that there must have been every temptation

[1] See chap. xvii., p. 288 ff.

to suppress what looked on the face of them unfulfilled predictions.

The third authenticates itself by its tenor, which is in complete harmony with the Lord's deprecatory attitude towards all attempts to calculate " the day and the hour " when the Kingdom should appear; *cf.* Luke xvii. 20, 21; Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36.

As for the last two, it is true that Matt. x. 32, 33 supplies an alternative reading, where the personal pronoun appears in place of " the Son of man," but the very strangeness of the phrasing given by Mark and Luke is strong *prima facie* evidence of theirs being the authentic version, while Matthew seems to have softened down the apparent antithesis between Jesus and the Son of man.

But is the antithesis merely verbal and apparent? We incline, on the contrary, to the conclusion that in these five sayings we hear indeed Jesus Himself referring to the Son of man, but that *He speaks of that Figure in the third person just because He is speaking of a third person.* As self-designations they are unintelligible, and only familiarity can blind us to the fact. Jesus could not have foretold the advent of One who was already present; He said only that the Son of man would presently appear; and the identity between Himself, as He then was, of whom certain men were ashamed in the present age, and the Son of man who would in turn be ashamed of these same men in the age to come, cannot be read out of the words, but has to be read into them.

If the view which we are trying to commend be accepted—if we have genuine sayings of the Lord's which, while they refer to the Son of man, do *not* refer to Himself, the effect of such a conclusion must, of course, have far-reaching reactions on our view of His messianic consciousness. It would then follow that that consciousness, so far from being full-grown at the outset of His ministry, was of gradual development, and reached completeness only during the closing phase of His earthly career. We should in that case be no longer concerned to devise an explanation of the problem why He veiled the secret of His Messiahship so closely, for our submission is that for the larger portion of His activity He had no messianic secret to veil; or perhaps it would come nearer the truth to say that the secret was there from the beginning, but it was for a long time a secret even from His own human consciousness. From the day of His baptism onward He

had stood very near, had drawn ever nearer, to it; but it was only towards the very end that He solved, once for all, the holy mystery, that He was none other than the Christ of God.

The view that the Lord's messianic consciousness was a growth, is in nowise derogatory to Him; it removes, on the other hand, a great many obscurities from the Gospel story in general, and from the use of the term "Son of man" in particular. What He preached in the first place was the imminent nearness of the day of judgment and the Kingdom of God, a conception which was in practice inseparable from that of the coming Messiah, God's Vicegerent, who would bring in the new and glorious era, and whose advent He accordingly proclaimed. For a while He may have thought that He was merely continuing John's preaching, though the sense of His own Divine Sonship could not let Him rest in such a view for long. Now such a saying as Mark viii. 38, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh," seems to afford a glimpse of an intermediate stage when Jesus, without identifying Himself as yet with the Messiah, already claims a certain solidarity with that glorious Personage. As men dealt with Him, so would Messiah deal with them. It is possible—though here we are moving, very reverently and hesitatingly, in the region of surmise—that at that time He may have been inclined to look upon Himself as others looked upon Him (Mark viii. 28) as the promised forerunner of Messiah, the messenger who should prepare His way; what is certain is that if He did pass through such an intermediate stage, He left it behind from the Cæsarean juncture at the latest[1]—that about that juncture He took a final step, and identified Himself explicitly with the Son of man, *not as claiming to be the Messiah already, but believing that after He had suffered death as a ransom for many, He would return in the rôle of God's Anointed.* The Kingdom, He was persuaded, required only one supreme act of self-offering in order to appear, and He had that sense of His own greatness, indeed, His uniqueness as the Son of God, which enabled Him to frame this sublime conception: the Kingdom was to be realized through His voluntary death, and, that agony overpast, there would follow His exaltation and return in glory.

We believe accordingly that from the time of Peter's confession onward Jesus began to speak of Himself, in the circle of His chosen intimates, as the Son of man, the Messiah-designate,

[1] Probably, indeed, somewhat earlier; see chap. viii., p. 134 f.

who, in order that He might come in the glory of His Father and with the clouds of heaven, must first of all go away, suffer many things, and be killed, ere He should presently reappear. And we shall now understand why those references to the Son of man which are also references to Himself are so predominantly occupied with His impending Passion and death—a condition of His Messiahship which the disciples so obstinately failed to grasp, whereas they quite understood all that He said about the Son of man coming in glory. The latter was a familiar conception, for which there was scriptural warrant, the former a stumbling-block, an incomprehensible paradox.

And yet that paradox was our Lord's own all-important revolutionary contribution to the doctrine of the Messiah which He found in possession. He took over and applied to Himself the messianic title which the Similitudes of Enoch had made more or less current in the Palestine of the first century, but He did so only when He had transformed its contents by adding to it the discovery which stamps Him as the sublimest religious Genius of all time—the discovery which He expressed in the words, "The Christ must suffer." That magnificent intuition was His, and His alone ; for though the Second Isaiah had uttered immortal words concerning the Suffering Servant of Yahveh, the idea of a Suffering *Messiah* had never been heard of in Judaism, and remained permanently foreign to it. A military conqueror His nation would have welcomed, but "Christ crucified" seemed a very mockery of their hopes; from Him they turned, and there, as St. Paul saw, was the tragedy—that they, of whom was Christ according to the flesh, should not have received Him according to the spirit. All the Christian centuries have verified the intuition of Jesus ; it is the suffering Christ who has proved the conquering Christ.

This, to sum up, is surely the most astounding romance in all history—incredible, had it not happened : that He who preached the coming of the Son of man with the intensest conviction did so for the greater part of the time without realizing that He was Himself the One whom he preached. When at last He had fully solved the secret of His own Personality, He was ready to die—there was nothing else left for Him to do. Moses wist not that his face shone ; and Jesus was the Christ ere He had known it.

CHAPTER VII

SIGNS AND WONDERS AND MIGHTY WORKS

AFTER the necessary digressions which have interrupted its progress, we now return to our narrative.

We had last seen Jesus seated in the little boat and teaching the multitudes " many things in parables " (Mark iv. 2), chiefly concerning the Kingdom. It is a temptation to fasten on the words with which this account of what is sometimes called the Sermon by the Sea closes—" But privately to his own disciples expounded He all things "—and to use them as a starting-point for various theories, essentially unamenable to proof, as to what this private instruction to the disciples consisted of ; and if our object were to find room for the greatest possible number of our Lord's recorded sayings, we might argue that it was at this point that He taught His inner circle the Lord's Prayer (Luke xi. 2–4 ; Matt. vi. 9–15), and that on the same occasion, or a similar one, He uttered this or that word of exhortation, prediction, or encouragement. But such an object is not legitimate in itself, and such ingenuities of allocation as those which suggest the probability, *e.g.*, that this was the juncture when Jesus admonished His followers to boldness of speech, using the illustrations of the city set on a hill (Matt. v. 14) and the lamp put on the stand (Mark iv. 21, 22), are of no value. Now and again an utterance seems to fit a particular situation so strikingly that the student feels justified in assigning the one to the other ; but, on the whole, historical science has nothing to do with the method of " Lo, here," and " Lo, there."

We do not know, and it is not necessary that we should know, the occasion on which Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer ; there is no doubt that He did teach such a form of prayer, though it is absent from our earliest Gospel, and though Luke and Matthew introduce it at different points in their respective records, and with considerable textual variations. In Matthew's Gospel it forms part of the Sermon on the Mount, and its simplicity is there contrasted with the " vain repetitions " and " much speaking " in which not only the Gentiles, but the Jews, habitually indulged[1] ;

[1] *Cf.* the *Sh'mone-Esre*, which the pious Jew repeated thrice daily, each of its eighteen divisions being approximately the length of the Lord's Prayer.

no doubt it was this very contrast which led to its insertion at that particular point. Luke tells us, quite indefinitely, that the request for a form of prayer was addressed to the Lord by one of His disciples "as He was praying in a certain place"; attempts have been made to identify the locality with the environs of Bethany or the Garden of Gethsemane, but on insufficient grounds. Luke's version of the prayer is shorter and simpler, and probably more authentic, than Matthew's, just as his version of the Beatitudes is apparently closer to the mind and speech of Jesus than Matthew's more elaborate parallel. The abrupt address, "Father," becomes in Matthew "Our Father, which art in heaven," a formula frequent in the First Gospel, while it occurs only once in the Second (Mark xi. 25), and once (in a modified form) in the Third (Luke xi. 13). Peculiar to Matthew are the petitions, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," and "Deliver us from evil," as well as the doxology appearing in many manuscripts—no doubt a liturgical addition—"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen."

Much has been written to prove the Lord's Prayer dependent, or independent, of Jewish sources; but it is fairly plain that, whether in the Matthæan or the Lucan version, it contains nothing—certainly not the address of God as Father—which was foreign to contemporary Jewish piety. Certainly the countrymen of Jesus prayed, and prayed fervently, for the coming Kingdom; certainly they carried the hallowing, the veneration, of the Divine Name so far even as to avoid its mention; certainly the petition for the morrow's sustenance must have gone up daily in thousands of humble homes in Palestine. The originality of the Lord's Prayer is the same which from the mass of Old Testament precepts singled out the Two Great Commandments as all-important and all-sufficient—the originality of selection and combination; and, though a parallel to every one of the petitions so chosen and combined by our Lord could be discovered "hidden among the stuff" of Jewish devotional literature, yet the whole which He produced retains His impress and its unique character.

We have already expressed the view that, as uttered by the first followers of Jesus, the words, "Thy kingdom come," had an eschatological significance. It is probable that the temptations, the *massoth* (*cf.* Deut. iv. 34, vii. 19, xxix. 3), which they prayed that they might be spared, were not inward temptations so much as the outward tribulations (θλίψεις), those "pangs of the Messiah" which were expected to usher in the

Kingdom, and that this prayer, too, therefore, is coloured by eschatological expectations. Finally, it is possible, though no more, that "the evil," or "evil one," from whom they were taught to beg deliverance, may have been a term used, both here and in the injunction of non-resistance (Matt. v. 39), to designate the foreign overlord, the obnoxious Roman power.[1] It was only to be expected that a daily prayer should reflect the temporal hopes and fears of those who offered it, with a vivid consciousness of all that was at stake for them.

The transition from the story of the Master's teaching all day long by the sea to the episodes which now follow in Mark's Gospel is effected by the Evangelist with such apparent simplicity—"And on that day, when even was come, He saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side" (Mark iv. 35)—that only on closer reflection do we begin to wonder whether that was indeed the course of events. Not only was there no reason for such a late and evidently improvised excursion to the heathen territory on the eastern shore of the lake, but the landing—and hence the encounter with the demoniac which immediately followed—would have taken place in the middle of the night, a supposition which runs counter to the whole tenor of that narrative. Moreover, we note that Matthew relates this voyage as following the Lord's first deeds of healing at Capernaum (viii. 18), and Luke, with cautious vagueness, introduces it with the indefinite formula, "Now it came to pass on one of these days" (viii. 22). Nor is it possible for us to be more precise than the Third Evangelist, seeing that Mark's statement is open to serious doubt. There were no doubt continual crossings and recrossings of the lake, only a few of which would be specially remembered when the Gospels came to be written; the writers did their best to combine these recollections into something like coherent narratives, but their combinations are at most surmises. On the whole, a comparison of the Marcan sections i. 21–iii. 35, iv. 1–34, iv. 35–v. 43, conveys the impression of a scheme not unlike that of Matthew, who alternates groups of sayings with groups of incidents; what Mark now gives us is a group of miraculous happenings which need not, any more than the collisions with the scribes and Pharisees, have occurred one after another.

[1] See "Anti-Zealotism in the Gospels" (*Exp. Times*, January 1916), by H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D., who points out that Hab. iii. 13 denotes by רָשָׁע the enemies of Israel, and that Ps. Sol. speak of the Romans as *θηρία πονηρά*, and of Pompey (or the Roman army) as *ὁ ἁμαρτωλός*. We may add that רָשָׁע, "bad man," is to this day the colloquial Jewish term for an anti-Semite.

All these episodes, and not least that of the stilling of the storm (Mark iv. 35–41 ; Matt. viii. 18, 23–27 ; Luke viii. 22–25), are described by Mark with great verve and gusto ; he displays in them his pronounced taste for realistic detail, graphic touches which do not necessarily represent the impressions of an eye-witness—say, of Peter—but may possibly be attributable to the unconscious artistry of the Evangelist himself. The healing of the demoniac on the eastern shore, of the woman with an issue of blood, and the raising of Jaïrus' daughter, are every one of them told at greater length by Mark than by either of his fellow-Synoptists, who drop some of the Marcan details.

In relating the adventure of the storm during the nightly crossing, too, Mark bears away the palm for picturesqueness. It is he who tells us that the disciples took Jesus " just as He was," *i.e.*, without preparations for the voyage; he alone mentions the " other boats " that were with Him, though of these we hear nothing further ; and he alone supplies the descriptive touch of the Master lying asleep " on the cushion " generally used by the steersman.[1] Like all lakes surrounded by hills, Gennesaret is liable to sudden storms, violent while they last, and terminating as suddenly as they have arisen ; such a tempest breaks out while they are sailing eastward, but the tired Master is not awakened from His slumber, even when the boat is beginning to ship water, and the situation is becoming critical. The disciples, or such of their number as were with Him, give way to sheer panic ; they are even—and this is a very human trait, well imagined if not well remembered—rather irritated by the spectacle of that calm Sleeper, unconscious and care-free while they are battling for their very lives against the fury of the wind and waves. He must be roused ; and, as they do so, some of them call out, " Master, carest thou not that we perish ? " The rest may be summarized in the fewest words : Jesus' " rebuke " to the storm, its sudden cessation, the great calm, His reproachful question to the disciples concerning their lack of faith, and their amazed and bewildered comment, " Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

It is easy enough to imagine the answer which the early Church would give to this query, if, indeed, the query itself was not an afterthought intended to point the reader to Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9, " O Lord God of hosts . . . Thou rulest the pride of the sea : when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." But there is yet another Old Testament parallel which rises to the mind as

[1] Mark uses the term προσκεφάλαιον, " pillow for the head," but the same word appears elsewhere to designate a boat-cushion.

we read this story, a parallel which is so close that it is difficult to resist the impression that it helped to give at least its shape to the incident related by the Evangelists. We are referring to Jonah i. 4–6 :

> The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. . . . But Jonah was gone down into the innermost parts of the ship ; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

These similarities become the more striking when we remember the tendency (*cf.* Matt. xii. 39, 40, xvi. 4) to regard the story of Jonah as being in some sense prophetic of Jesus. That there is some literary dependence of the Gospel narrative of the storm upon the Old Testament incident seems to suffer no doubt ; the question is, how far we can regard the former as resting on any basis of fact. This is a case where " surmises are cheap, knowledge is dear." What may have happened is that Jesus slept through a brief storm on the lake, and that when He was told of it afterwards—perhaps with the added remark, " But thou wert fast asleep, even as Jonah was "—He may have expressed His surprise at their fearfulness, asking, " Have ye not yet faith ? " That was certainly His own characteristic attitude, which He wished to implant in the hearts of the disciples, viz., the sense that all men are in God's hands, that the Heavenly Father watches over His children, that without His will not a sparrow can fall to the ground (Matt. x. 29), and that to that will we may safely commit ourselves. Or He may really, in that reliance on His power which must have been strengthened by His successful cures, and sharing the conception of His time, which saw spirit agencies in all the phenomena of nature, have " rebuked " the storm, as He is said to have " rebuked " the fever of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke iv. 39) ; and when the uproar ceased simultaneously, or soon after, the disciples would be fully convinced that it was a case of cause and effect.

But there is still another and very simple possibility. It is conceivable that when the Lord found Himself none too gently roused, and saw the disciples, in their wild excitement, reduced to incoherence and inefficiency, shouting and wailing, He addressed His " rebuke "—not an idyllic " Peace, be still ! " but a sharp and drastic, " Silence, get muzzled ! " which is the literal translation—to the ringleader of the noise, and not to the tempest.

" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm " ; a coincidence, to be sure, but life is full of coincidences. If this be the true explanation, the matter would strike the disciples, superstitious like most sailors and fishermen, as a miracle, and it is easy to see how inevitably the incident came to be told in the form that it was to the angry elements that Jesus called out ; nor could such a seeming command over wind and waves fail to fill the disciples with a new awe of their Leader.

The story of the stilling of the tempest invites comparison with that of Jesus walking on the waves (Mark vi. 45–52 ; Matt. xiv. 22–33 ; John vi. 15–21) ; in both cases we read of a crossing which took place after a day's teaching given to the multitudes ; [1] in both the disciples are distressed by contrary winds ; in both, at the supernatural intervention of Jesus, the storm ceases ; in both the effect upon the disciples is to reduce them to amazement. With so many features in common to the two, it is not surprising that both have been regarded as going back to one occurrence, which came to be told in different forms.

As we have already seen, it is not necessary for us to assume that the incident which Mark, followed by the other Synoptists, connects with this crossing, viz., the healing of a violent demoniac on the eastern side (Mark v. 1–20 ; Matt. viii. 28–34 ; Luke viii. 26–39), really was so connected. It is difficult to understand the motive for a visit to non-Jewish territory at that particular juncture, especially on the part of One who avowed Himself to have been sent to none but His own countrymen (Matt. xv. 24 ; *cf. ib.* x. 6). We can only conclude that at some time during His ministry, but probably later than Mark would lead us to believe, our Lord did cross over to the territory of the Decapolis, a league of Greek towns, only one of which, Scythopolis or Bethsean, was situated on the western side of Jordan ; but when and why He did so we are unable to surmise. Mark and Luke tell the story in very similar fashion, even down to details ; Matthew's version, though in substantial agreement with that of Mark and Luke, is much abridged, occupying seven verses as compared with Mark's twenty, and he substitutes for the one demoniac two, just as he substitutes (xx. 30) two blind men at Jericho for the one mentioned by Mark (x. 46) and Luke (xviii. 35). This tendency to duplication is an unexplained peculiarity of Matthew's, which need not, however, detain us.

[1] *Cf.* even Mark iv. 2, " And he taught them many things," with Mark vi. 34, " And he began to teach them many things."

The first difficulty in relation to this episode is geographical; Mark tells us that Jesus and the disciples landed in the country of the Gerasenes, Matthew speaks of the country of the Gadarenes, while a certain number of manuscripts alter the name into Gergesenes. Now Gerasa, which became a highly important town in the later days of the Roman Empire, was so long a way from the south-eastern end of the Lake of Galilee that Mark, with whom geography is not a strong point, is almost certainly mistaken in naming it in this connection; its territory could never have extended to the borders of the lake. Gadara is still a good distance from the south-eastern end, but we know of the existence of villages of the Gadarenes extending in that direction, so that this may have been the scene of the incident; in that case it becomes quite certain that the latter did not take place on the occasion Mark assigns to it, for if, as he states, Jesus and the disciples left the western shore at nightfall, they would have had to row a distance of seven miles, with a storm to delay them, before they landed, and the ensuing encounter would have taken place in the dead of night. Origen, however, speaks of an "ancient city" called Gergesa, near the Lake of Tiberias, with a rocky promontory jutting into the sea, and says that this is the place down which the swine precipitated themselves. This Gergesa has been tentatively identified with the ruined city of Kursi, rather less than half way down the eastern shore of the lake. One sees how soon the tradition as to the locality of this miracle became uncertain. Mark, though he is mistaken as to the name of the locality, is able to describe the scene for us; he knows that the territory of the town came down to the shore, that there was a steep place falling sheer into the lake, and that a burial-place was situate not far from the waterside.

Whatever the time and the occasion of this expedition, it appears certain that, almost as soon as the Master and His companions had landed, Jesus had the rather startling experience of meeting with a dangerous maniac—an unmanageable case, concerning whom the Evangelists are able to give us so many circumstantial details as make one wonder how these could have been obtained during an exceedingly brief and agitated visit to that heathen region. His violence, we read (Matt. viii. 28 *b*), made him the terror of the countryside, and men were content to leave him alone, since all attempts to put him under restraint had failed. He had left the habitations of the living and dwelt among the tombs—the favourite haunt of demons, according to the superstitions of the time. Like so many of the mentally

unbalanced of every age, he realized something of his abnormal condition, which he attributed to his being possessed by what Mark v. 2 calls " an unclean spirit," but what he himself conceives to be quite a multitude of such—a whole division of Satan's army, or, as he calls it, " a legion." He rushes up to Jesus, shouting incoherent words—not improbably threats against these strangers who have invaded *his* domain. If we assume that he told them to "go away, or he would make them," we shall perhaps come pretty near to the facts. Mark, of course, and the other Evangelists after him, represent the matter as if the maniac —or, rather, the unclean spirit in him—immediately recognized Jesus, and addressed Him in terror as the Son of God (*cf.* Mark i. 24), *i.e.*, the Messiah, whose function it is to subdue Satan and drive out his minions ; but that is merely legendary embellishment. What follows is highly significant ; Jesus, with that presence of mind and power of personality which are peculiarly His, is by no means disconcerted or frightened, but asks the demon—not the demoniac—his name. In order to understand this proceeding on the part of our Lord we have to remember that there was a widespread notion to the effect that for the purpose of gaining ascendancy over an evil spirit it was highly desirable to learn his name ; once this knowledge had been obtained, the demon was in the exorcist's power—he was no longer elusive, but could be " named " and ordered about.[1] The maniac, identifying himself with his supposed tormentor, gives up the secret. " Legion is my name, for we are many," he cries, and immediately Jesus follows up this initial advantage by bidding the demon come out of the man, who thereupon—still acting as the spokesman of the unclean spirits—begs Jesus not to send the legion out of the country. We know from such a passage as Matt. xii. 43–45 that the demons were believed to dislike changing their residence, and were even wont, after being driven out, to return to their former habitation with reinforcements—which, of course, means that frequently these exorcisms were of only temporary effect, and were followed by relapses graver than the original disease.

But the Evangelist's account of this patient's cure, in itself as credible as other accounts of similar cures, is complicated by the introduction of a feature which has served to concentrate exceptional interest upon this particular episode. We read that the " legion " of demons asked to be allowed to take up their dwelling in a numerous herd of swine—about two thousand—

[1] A similar belief may be indicated by the angel's refusal, in Judges xiii. 18, to divulge his name at Manoah's request.

which were feeding on the hillside; that Jesus granted this request forthwith; that the spirits accordingly entered into the swine, and that the latter straightway rushed down the declivity into the lake, and were drowned. The erstwhile maniac, on the other hand, was completely cured; and when a crowd of townspeople, advised by the swineherds of what had happened, appeared on the scene, they found the former raving lunatic quietly seated, clothed and in his right mind.

How are we to think of these astonishing events? Huxley's comment has become classical, and may be quoted:

> Everything I know of physiological and pathological science leads me to entertain a very strong conviction that the phenomena ascribed to possession are as purely natural as those which constitute smallpox; everything I know of anthropology leads me to think that the belief in demons and demoniacal possession is a mere survival of a once universal superstition, and that its persistence, at the present time, is pretty much at the inverse ratio of the general instruction, intelligence, and sound judgment of the population among whom it prevails. Everything I know of law and justice convinces me that the wanton destruction of other people's property is a misdemeanour of evil example.

And, further, after laying down the canon that the more an alleged occurrence contravenes probability, the stronger is the evidence required to corroborate it, he delivers himself as follows:

> Now, in the Gadarene affair, I do not think I am unreasonably sceptical if I say that the existence of demons who can be transferred from a man to a pig does contravene probability. Let me be perfectly candid. I admit that I have no *a priori* objection to offer. There are physical things, such as *taniæ* and *trichinæ*, which can be transferred from men to pigs, and *vice versa*, and which do undoubtedly produce most diabolical and deadly effects on both. For anything I can absolutely prove to the contrary, there may be spiritual things capable of the same transmigration, with like effects. . . . So I declare as plainly as I can that I am unable to show cause why these transferable devils should not exist. . . . Nevertheless, as good Bishop Butler says, "Probability is the guide of life"; and it seems to me that this is just one of the cases in which the canon of credibility and testimony which I have ventured to lay down has full force. So that, with the most entire respect for many (by no means for all) of our witnesses for the truth of demonology, ancient and modern, I conceive their evidence on this particular matter to be ridiculously insufficient to warrant their conclusion.—(*Essay on Agnosticism.*)

But one may share Huxley's view on the subject of demoniacal possession, and approve of his contention that it would have been wrong for Jesus to destroy, or be instrumental in the destruction of, pigs which were the property of other people, and yet conclude

that there was some nucleus of fact from which this grotesque legend developed ; indeed, we cannot account for the origin of this circumstantial story without crediting it with some foundation, however non-supernatural. We submit as an inherently probable explanation that the maniac, in a culminating paroxysm, rushed upon a herd of swine, frightened the animals, and caused them to stampede out of sight in the direction of—not necessarily into—the lake ; and that in the reaction following the attack he was found sitting quietly, easily managed now, most likely in a dazed, subdued condition which, in comparison with his former violence, suggested a cure, when the townspeople arrived. The only impression made by the incident upon the Gergesenes was apparently of such a character that they were extremely anxious for Jesus to depart ; and the Lord's refusal to take the man back with him—possibly at the request of the Gergesenes rather than of the ex-demoniac himself—may have been due to a very reasonable apprehension of another and worse attack, which might not have been so easy to deal with in a boat. That Jesus wished the cured patient to remain behind in order to bear witness to the great things the Lord had done for him, and that he accordingly " published " the tidings of his marvellous recovery in all that district, is an imaginative anticipation of the preaching of the Gospel among the gentiles. If the request to take the man back with Him was made, there was every reason for declining it, not the least being the risk of having such a passenger on board of a frail craft ; and, as the natives' desire for the withdrawal of the Galilean party was presumably urgent, they re-embarked without delay, and put back for the western shore, probably—if we may so interpret Matt. ix. 1—for Capernaum.

In Mark's, and especially in Luke's, account of this return of the Master to Galilee, and the events which followed (Mark v. 21–43 ; Luke viii. 40–56 ; *cf.* Matt. ix. 18–26), we are given to understand—as if to efface the impression produced by His enforced departure from the Decapolis—that the people on the western coast received Jesus with open arms, and, in fact, were " all waiting for Him," in striking contrast to the inhospitable reception of the Gergesenes ; in both these Gospels we are carried straight along to the episode of Jaïrus' daughter and the woman with an issue of blood. Matthew, on the other hand, inserts between the return from Gergesa and the latter incidents quite a variety of material given earlier by Mark, viz., the healing of the paralytic, the call of Matthew the publican, the supper with

the publicans and sinners, the question about fasting, and the parables of the new piece of cloth and the new wine and old wineskins (Matt. ix. 2–17). We cannot decide which of these arrangements is the more accurate ; on the face of it, it seems strange that Matthew, if he had Mark's Gospel before him, should have arbitrarily varied Mark's order.

All we can say is that at some time, whether prior or subsequent to that rather unsatisfactory expedition to the Hellenic borders of Lake Tiberias, there came to Jesus a certain ruler of the synagogue—in Matt. ix. 18, simply "a ruler"—in sore distress ; his little girl was lying seriously ill, apparently at death's door, and he implored Jesus to save the child's life (Mark v. 21–24, 35–43 ; Matt. ix. 18, 19, 23–26 ; Luke viii. 40–42, 49–56). Under ordinary circumstances so important a personage as this president or warden—the name Jaïrus is not in all the best manuscripts of Mark, and is absent from Matthew—was probably a pillar of orthodoxy, and none too favourably inclined towards this Nazarene rabbi, who performed cures even on the Sabbath (*cf.* Luke xiii. 14) ; but now that his own child was in danger, he resorted readily enough to a man who—orthodox or heterodox—certainly possessed the healing gift. Jesus, in any case, saw at that moment not a religious official, but only an agonizing father who prayed for His help on a sick child's behalf. Matthew heightens the miracle that is about to take place by making the ruler say that his daughter is "even now dead," so that he really asks Jesus to bring her back to life ; Mark, more soberly, reports Jaïrus as saying that she was "at the point of death."

In any case, Jesus is ready there and then to go with Jaïrus, apparently assured of His ability to grant his request. That is not surprising to the Evangelists, with their belief in the Lord's virtual omnipotence; but it should be surprising to us, who have to ask, Whence came Jesus to be so confident that He would be able to fulfil Jaïrus' petition? The answer appears to be that Jesus had a convinced belief in the power of faith—to use His own striking phrase—to remove even mountains ; He seems to have felt that when faith reached a certain white-hot intensity it had a compelling force—that God, so to speak, could not help granting what was asked of Him with unreserved, unquestioning trust. We shall not dogmatize on this point, if we are wise, nor on what it involves ; but that our Lord, as a matter of fact, did feel like this appears past doubt, and it was on that feeling that He acted in this instance. Often, when a sufferer was healed, He seems to have been in the habit of saying, "Thy faith hath made

thee whole" (*cf.* Luke xvii. 19 and Mark ix. 23, "All things are possible to him that believeth"); where He could do no mighty work, He set it down to lack of faith—"and He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6).

He is yet on His way to the warden's house, surrounded by a curious throng, when He feels a furtive tug at His outer garment (Mark v. 25–34; Matt. ix. 20–22; Luke viii. 43–48). He turns round, and asks who it is that has touched Him—Mark and Luke represent the matter as miraculous by suggesting, quite gratuitously, that Jesus "perceived in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth," like a kind of mesmeric or magnetic current, when it is much simpler to assume that He became aware of a hand clutching His cloak for a moment. Upon His question a woman confesses, greatly frightened, that it is she who has presumed so far; she had been a sufferer for years from an issue of blood, which in the eyes of the Law made her unclean, and had found no relief from any physician, but had rather grown worse; but, she had argued within herself, if she but touched the rabbi's robe as He passed she might get well—and lo, it had happened so, even upon the instant. This is, in effect, a very plain case of auto-suggestion; the intense excitement of the moment had stanched the flow of her blood, whether temporarily or permanently we are not in a position to say. But for the time being she was cured, had cured herself, without any active co-operation on the Lord's part, as He states in the formula, "Your faith has made you well." That it was He who was capable of inspiring such faith is not to be forgotten. Doubtless this story, in which for once we have no suggestion of an unclean spirit being the cause of bodily disease, is true; at the same time, we shall not attribute to such events any outstanding *religious* significance. We are touched by this poor woman's confidence in Jesus' power over sickness; but for any true estimate of His personality His acts of healing, however tenderly inspired, are of strictly secondary importance.

This applies even to so humanly moving a tale as that of the cure of Jaïrus' daughter, told with great picturesqueness and wealth of detail by Mark, and with quite notable abridgment by Matthew. Jesus and the warden are still on their way when a messenger meets them with the news that the child has breathed her last, and it is of no use to trouble the Master further. Whether Jesus at that time spoke the beautiful words, "Fear not; only believe," we are unable to say; but He followed the father to the house, possibly because He knew how often death was thought

to have taken place when the patient was merely in a state of extreme exhaustion, possibly from a feeling that, if the worst had happened, the bereaved parents stood in need of sympathy and comfort. They arrive at the dwelling, where, we are told—a detail somewhat difficult to credit—the customary mourning ceremonies are already in progress; a kind of wake is being held with shrill keening and general noisy excitement, which jars upon Jesus, as the professional and conventional side of funerals does on every sensitive mind to this day. That, assuming the facts are as Mark states them, He should sharply deprecate this tumult, we can well imagine; that the company of mourners should resent this interruption of what to them is really a form of enjoyment is equally intelligible.

Now, if we follow the narrative of the Synoptists, and assume that the words, "The child is not dead, but sleepeth," were spoken by our Lord *before* He had seen her, we have, of course, a stupendous miracle; but is it not obviously more likely that He uttered that pronouncement *after* inspecting, and possibly examining, the patient, and that He meant precisely what He said—that it was then that the mourners laughed Him to scorn, and that after having them turned out He awakened the sleeper? That is so simple and satisfactory a hypothesis that we adopt it without hesitation. We do not know what the child was suffering from, but her ailment may have been incidental to her age. The diagnosis of death among the Jews was all the more liable to error since to touch the dead involved ritual uncleanness; we may presume that Jesus did not let the ritual enactment prevent Him from convincing Himself definitely whether life had really left the little frame, and, on detecting some sign to the contrary, He bends over her, with the words, preserved by Mark only, "*Talitha, koumi.*" It is worth mentioning that the original meaning of *talitha* was "lamb," but that the term had come to be used as one of endearment for "child," much like the English "kiddy." "Lambkin, wake up," the Master says, as He bends over the child, aiding her with His own hand, and straightway she opens her eyes and raises her head from the pillow. It adds to the simplicity and naïve truthfulness of the story that Jesus ordered the little patient to be given something to eat; on the other hand, the reader is moved to a certain impatience when Mark, and Luke after him, aver that Jesus charged the overjoyed parents "straitly" to keep their daughter's restoration a secret—just as if such concealment had been possible, after all that had preceded the alleged command. Mark's object is, apparently,

yet once more to account for the Jews' rejection of the Lord, whom the Evangelist represents as having Himself prevented His countrymen from understanding or appreciating Him.[1] By how easy a process the story of the child who had been brought round when she lay at death's door grew into one about a child who had actually died, and was miraculously restored to life, we can see by comparing Mark's narrative with Matthew's ; human nature being what it is, the tendency will always be to underline and magnify the extraordinary, and not to rest until it has become the supernatural.

There are two other raisings from the dead told in the Gospels, viz. that of the widow's son at Nain, in Luke vii. 11–17, and that of Lazarus, in John xi. 1–44. Both are wholly different from the story of Jaïrus' daughter, for in each instance the miracle is performed in the presence of a great concourse of people, with a maximum of publicity ; neither does the situation in either of these cases leave room for the supposition that death had not really occurred. The widow's son is brought to life when he is being carried to his grave, Lazarus after a deliberate delay of four days, when his body had already begun to decay. Such miracles could not have been worked before so many witnesses without Mark knowing of them ; nor is it conceivable that, had he known, he would have failed to record them. If he does not know of these events, the inference is inevitable, viz., that they did not happen. We do not know how the story of the widow's son originated—possibly it had its starting-point in the phrase, " This my son was dead, and is alive again," with which the parable of the prodigal all but closes ; on the other hand, we do know that the words, " and he gave him to his mother " (Luke vii. 15), are a direct reminiscence from 1 Kings xvii. 23, where Elijah raises the widow's son at Zarephath, and possibly the same is true of the whole episode.

The story of the raising of Lazarus stands in a different category ; it is a mighty miracle, performed, not from motives of compassion, but as a crowning " sign," intended to show Jesus as " the Resurrection and the Life," and with an elaborate *mise-en-scène* that has for its sole purpose to heighten the effect. We shall not examine this narrative, or the attempts which have been made to render it credible, in any detail. The position of the historical student cannot be better stated than in the words of Prof. E. F. Scott : " We cannot with any show of probability find room for

[1] *Cf.* chap. v., p. 89.

it "—the raising of Lazarus—" in any intelligible scheme of the life of Christ. It is inconceivable that a miracle of such magnitude, performed in the one week of our Lord's life of which we have a full record, and in presence of crowds of people in a suburb of Jerusalem—a miracle, moreover, which was the immediate cause, according to John, of the Crucifixion—should have been simply passed over by the other Evangelists. We are almost compelled to the conclusion that the narrative is, in the main, symbolical."[1]

But if, according to Prof. Burkitt, " for all its dramatic setting, it is impossible to regard the story of the raising of Lazarus as a narrative of historical events,"[2] must we look upon it as a pure invention of the Evangelist's? Probably not. It is true that, even if he had freely invented it from beginning to end in order to give expression to his idea of the life-bestowing power of Jesus, he would not lie open to the charge of unveracity in the moral sense of the term, for his aim in writing was avowedly other than merely historical (xx. 31); but there is another and more probable way of accounting for the rise of the legend. The name of Lazarus, as well as those of Martha and Mary, occur in Luke's Gospel (x. 38–42, xvi. 19–31), though not in conjunction, nor with any suggestion of relationship between Lazarus and the two sisters of Bethany; indeed, the story of the rich man and the beggar in Luke's pages is not related as fact, but as a moral and religious apologue. In this tale we may find the foundation of the Johannine miracle, the nucleus from which his narrative was possibly developed. The plausibility of this theory will become apparent if we recall that in Luke, Lazarus is represented to have died; that his resuscitation is actually suggested by the rich man; and that the fable concludes with these words: " If one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And He said unto them, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." That, we believe, is the starting-point from which, we know not by how many intervening stages, the story grew into the shape in which we find it in the Fourth Gospel; and it is possible enough that by the time he wrote his work, the Evangelist had to do little more than add the impressive descriptive matter. If Jesus had said concerning one Lazarus, " If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead," it might not take long before the busy *haggada* added, " And so indeed it happened, for Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet did not the Jews believe."

[1] *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 45. [2] *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 223.

From the physical "signs and wonders and mighty works" which have occupied us in the present chapter we turn, in conclusion, by way of grateful contrast, to a moral and spiritual miracle—the miracle of a changed heart, and a changed life. The incident (Luke vii. 36–50) of the Lord's presence to supper at the Pharisee's house, when a woman who had been a sinner came out of the night, out of the streets, to express her boundless gratitude to Jesus, forms part of the Third Evangelist's separate tradition; and, since we cannot tell at all to what period of His ministry it belongs by right, there can be the less objection to our relating it at this juncture. The anecdote is thought by many to be merely a variant of that meal in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany (Mark xiv. 3–9, Matt. xxvi. 6–13), when a woman also came in to anoint the Lord, breaking the cruse of alabaster, pouring the perfume over His head; but, though Luke may have borrowed from the latter the detail of the anointing, which is quite immaterial to his story, that—together with the name of the host on each occasion—is the whole extent of the parallelism between the two episodes. What we may really take to have happened in the Pharisee's house is the impulsive act of a penitent and converted soul, who cannot do other than acknowledge all she owes to this wonderful Teacher, the Friend of sinners, as His opponents sneeringly called Him, unwittingly bestowing upon Him one of His proudest titles to the love of mankind. This woman had come under the gracious and heart-searching influence of Jesus; He had touched some chord in her, and set it vibrating with the longing for better things; He had shown her that if she desired to turn, it was not too late; He had not repelled her, or condemned her with a loveless glance of scorn; in a word, He had saved her, and her overflowing heart demanded that she should take this opportunity of thanking Him, not in speech, but in an utter humility, kneeling by His feet and kissing them—washing them with her tears, and drying them with her hair. It is an immortal scene, and one on which the piety of every generation has loved to dwell.

The Pharisee's amazement that Jesus should suffer the touch of such a one we can understand, and probably it expressed itself in words. We may doubt whether Jesus, who, after all, was this man's guest, would have pointedly contrasted his coolly polite hospitality with the woman's passionate devotion; these verses (44–46) read like a later elaboration—they are too didactic, and at the same time run counter to that natural refinement which would not rate and insult the host at whose table one was reclining.

But doubtless the Lord illustrated His thought concerning this incident by the parable of the Two Debtors, one of whom owed five hundred shillings, the other fifty, and who—neither being able to pay—were both let off their debt. Did it not stand to reason, He continued, that the greater obligation would call forth the greater love? And if this woman poured out the treasures of her affection with prodigal abandon, did not that prove that she had exceptional cause for so exceptional a demonstration? What caused her to behave in this manner was that through Jesus she had received the assurance of the Father's readiness to forgive the truly penitent, and of her own power, by His grace, to make a fresh start in life. We have to avoid the common and complete misunderstanding of the Master's words, as though the woman's sins had been forgiven because she loved much—as though her love had been the cause, and forgiveness the effect. The exact contrary is the case; she loved the Saviour so intensely because she had experienced such unexpected, such unbounded pardon.[1] With majestic mildness the great Deliverer turns round to the woman, who is still quietly sobbing, as people do when their heart is pierced with joy: "thy sins are forgiven," He assures her once more, lest she should doubt God's free gift again; and yet once more, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

A tempest stilled on a lake; a legion of devils driven out of a man into a herd of swine; a child brought back, if we must put that construction on it, from bodily death to bodily life; and a woman saved from despair and shame and self-contempt to a renewed faith in the possibility of things pure and lovely and honourable and of good report—the possibility of such things *for her*, through God's mercy and pardon: which of these mighty works appeals most to us, reveals to us most of the character and dynamic of Jesus Christ? Not in the conquest of the elements, nor in power over the ailments of the human frame, but in the conquest of human hearts, in the power to revive dead souls and to present them before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy—there we behold the Miracle which is ageless and ever enacted anew; there we worship the power of God unto salvation, even God manifest in the flesh.

[1] The addition, "But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little," owes nothing to the mind of Christ, but represents a singularly uninspired gloss.

CHAPTER VIII

"ART THOU HE THAT COMETH?"

However impossible it is to discover the exact sequence in which the events of our Lord's Galilean ministry unrolled themselves, and notwithstanding the hostility which His challenging words and acts provoked among the official guardians and exponents of religion, there is no doubt that His preaching and healing soon became the principal topic of conversation throughout that whole countryside. Rumour might exaggerate the cures wrought by Him, and His sayings might not always be correctly reported as they passed from mouth to mouth; but men felt, and could not but feel, that an extraordinary personality had come upon the scene, and one which must be reckoned with. Luke no doubt is correct when he sums up the popular impression created by Jesus in the "report" which he says "went forth concerning him in the whole of Judæa"—by which he means Palestine—"A great prophet is arisen among us; and, God hath visited his people" (Luke vii. 16, 17).

But in that atmosphere of tense expectancy the appearance of one who announced in such confident tones the imminence of the new and Divine order could not but lead ere long to speculations concerning the messenger himself; not once but many a time the query would spontaneously frame itself in the minds and on the lips of the people, "Who then is this?"—and, such a query once started, Jesus could hardly fail to be brought into some sort of personal connection with those messianic hopes that were agitating all hearts. Indeed, His whole manner of preaching the coming kingdom, and the assurance of His references to the advent of the Son of man, suggested, and more than vaguely suggested, that He Himself must stand in some special relation to those momentous events: was it not a likely supposition that He was the appointed harbinger for whom they were all waiting? Was not this herald's office precisely the one He was exercising? Moreover, those very cures in which popular belief, and Jesus Himself, saw so many victories over Satan, seemed the first rays of that dawning day when God alone should reign, and Satan be wholly defeated—Satan, most pre-eminently embodied in the

Roman world-power. Who then was this who was casting out devils? Who, indeed, could He be but "Elijah, who was to come" (Matt. xi. 14) and usher in the great consummation? That Jesus was regarded by many as that very personage, whom the last of the prophets had foretold as the immediate vaunt-courier of "the great and terrible day of Yahveh" (Mal. iv. 5), we know from the Synoptics (Mark vi. 15, *cf.* viii. 28; Matt. xvi. 14; Luke ix. 8, *cf.* ix. 19); the wonder is rather that there were any rival theories to this one. In the present chapter we shall see this question—Jesus' own place in the messianic, eschatological scheme—assuming definite shape and growing external importance.

Some time after He had awakened the daughter of Jaïrus from a sleep which every one but He had thought the sleep of death, Jesus, accompanied by His intimates, set out on another preaching tour, which in due course brought Him to His own native place of Nazareth in southern Galilee, some thirty miles from Capernaum. The story of this unsatisfactory visit is told by Mark and Matthew almost in the same words (Mark vi. 1–6; Matt. xiii. 54–58), though in different settings; both speak of Nazareth and its surroundings as "His own country" (lit. "his fatherland," πατρίς), a term which furnishes internal evidence against His supposed birth in Bethlehem. Luke also gives us a narrative of a visit paid by Jesus to Nazareth (iv. 16–30),[1] which is almost certainly identical with the one related by Mark and Matthew, though he places it at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry, his object being to show that the Gospel was rejected, first in His own town, then in His own province, and finally by His nation at large, before it was offered to the gentiles. It is not likely that after meeting with such a rebuff as He suffered in Nazareth, Jesus would have made a second attempt to sow the seed of the Gospel on such stony soil; in His own country the prophet was conspicuously without honour, and the Synoptists do not attempt to slur over that unpalatable fact.

The incident which they chronicle takes us once more to the synagogue, and the fact that Jesus found it well to wait with proclaiming His message till He had an audience ready made instead of gathering a crowd in the open air, is perhaps not without significance. In Mark's version we are not told the substance of the Lord's address; no doubt the Evangelist wishes us to understand that He preached simply the nearness of the Kingdom, and the need of repentance. This, however, no longer satisfied Luke,

[1] *Cf.* chap. iv., page 60.

writing as he did a generation later, a gentile for gentiles, who were naturally less interested in the Jewish national hopes concerning the Kingdom—hopes which moreover had so far remained unrealized. Accordingly he fills in what Mark has left a blank, with material from his separate tradition, which told how on one occasion—possibly this, possibly some other—Jesus had made effective use of Isa. lxi. 1, 2,[1] a passage which, with its sympathy for the poor and oppressed, found a very lively echo in Luke's own heart. For this Evangelist the Gospel means first and foremost "good tidings to the poor," the reclamation of the outcast, comfort to the sorrowing; that this should have been the keynote of the Lord's preaching he felt no doubt whatever. It is indeed credible enough that this very passage occupied the mind of Jesus not infrequently; we shall see that He pointed to it in answer to the Baptist's message of inquiry, as showing that the Kingdom was already at the doors. Luke tells the episode—Jesus opening the roll, finding the place of the prophecy, closing the reading and interpretation with the words, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"—with great vividness, making us spectators and listeners, and it may well have happened as he relates it.

But whatever it was that took place in the synagogue, Jesus for once failed completely to get *en rapport* with His audience; at first, the Synoptists give us to understand the people were impressed, but they were impressed against their will, and soon threw off the spell by asking themselves the question, "Whence hath this man these things?" A young artisan of humble birth and connections, whose family were well known locally, and probably of little account, and who had not so long since been glad to execute their commissions—what presumption on the part of such a one, who had never even been trained as a rabbi, to preach to them! So spoke local jealousy and petty pride; and as for the mighty works which rumour credited Him with having performed elsewhere, they might perhaps believe these reports if He would show them a sample of His alleged powers, but hardly otherwise. It may be noted in passing that the two Gospels which deny the human paternity of our Lord represent the Nazarenes as asking, "Is not this the carpenter's *son*?" while Mark gives the question as "Is not this the carpenter?"

So much is plain, that the whole atmosphere in the synagogue at Nazareth was unpropitious for the proclamation of the Lord's

[1] The Evangelist, quoting from memory, combines with it a reminiscence from Isa. lviii. 6. (LXX.)

message; and so unfortunately did that atmosphere react upon Jesus that, as Mark candidly tells us, "He could do there no mighty work"—not one[1]—"and He marvelled because of their unbelief." Matthew alters this, from motives of reverence, into "And He *did not many* mighty works there, *because of* their unbelief," which conveys a totally different impression, viz., as if Jesus, so far from being unable to perform wonderful cures on that occasion, had purposely refrained from doing so as a punishment of the people's attitude. But the facts doubtless are as Mark reports them: Jesus, who could do mighty works where He met with unquestioning faith or even with downright opposition which kindled His power—as when He restored the paralytic at Capernaum—was shorn of that power in the presence of this cold and meanly critical assembly of people who could only remember that this preacher was one whom they had seen grow up, and that in narrow circumstances. They knew all His family, and in this familiarity found reasons enough for disbelieving that He could wield any authority from on high.[2] Breathing the chill air of that village meeting-house, Jesus experienced a strange impotence, and abandoned the attempt to win His fellow-townsfolk to the Gospel, leaving Nazareth for ever.

Luke, following his own source, represents this expedition, and the effects of the Lord's preaching—he makes no mention of mighty works—as so nearly disastrous that it ended in His forcible ejection from the town and an attempt to murder Him; the words, "But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way," are intended to indicate a supernatural power of escaping violence, not unlike what we find attributed to Him in the Fourth Gospel (*cf.* John vii. 30, viii. 59). Mark knows nothing of such an attack, which is perhaps not a historical feature, but states simply that after His failure in Nazareth Jesus went about the surrounding villages teaching; among the neighbouring localities which He visited may have been Cana (John ii. 1–11, iv. 46–54) and Nain (Luke vii. 12–17).[3]

[1] The clause "save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them," has too much the air of an interpolation—whether by the author or some later editor—designed to mitigate the effect of the original statement. We can see from Matthew's modification that such a motive was present and made itself felt.

[2] Had there clung to Him any recollections of wonderful phenomena attending His birth and infancy, such a contemptuous estimate of Him would have been impossible.

[3] The sayings about Elijah and Elisha manifesting their powers only for the benefit of heathen, and not for that of Israelites, which Luke attributes to our Lord *à propos* of His rejection in His own country, seem to us of doubtful authenticity; they belong to the region of primitive Christian apologetics, and the justification of the gentile mission. Jesus neither at that time nor at any other anticipated the Apostle's "From henceforth I will go unto the gentiles" (Acts xviii. 6), but considered His mission to be exclusively "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24).

The expedition to Nazareth had not merely brought a painful personal rebuff to Jesus; it was also, in view of the imminence of the Kingdom, and the work to be accomplished in the short remaining interval, an unprofitable expenditure of precious time, calculated in itself to stimulate the Lord to redoubled exertions. Mark, therefore, may have been guided by a correct instinct or a correct tradition in following this episode with the Mission of the Twelve (Mark vi. 7–13; *cf.* Matt. x. 1, 5–15; Luke ix. 1–5, *cf.* x. 1–12). We must remember that in Jesus' view there was no time to be lost : it was the nearness of the Kingdom which made speedy repentance—the soul's return to God—so urgent. If we are right in thinking that He expected the great event to coincide with the harvest which was even then ripening—and this was the conclusion to which His parables of the mystery of the Kingdom seemed to us to point—it was a matter of the utmost importance that as many of His own people as possible should be reached by His message, and induced to repent, before the sands should have run out. The approach of the Kingdom—coming suddenly, at some unforeseen moment, like a thief (Matt. xxiv. 43 ; Luke xii. 39 ; *cf.* 1 Thess. v. 2)—meant the equally sudden approach of the Judgment ; to meet that supreme crisis in pride and impenitence and hardness of heart was to run into a fate compared with which that of Sodom would be tolerable ! No doubt the body of intimates whom Jesus had gathered round Him had received special instruction from Him with a view to the duties which should presently devolve upon them ; He now decided that the moment had come to send them out, two by two, with the one message which the Baptist had first sounded by the banks of the Jordan. In addition to this, we read, He conferred upon them gifts of healing, which, of course, all concerned interpreted as the power to cast out demons. On this point it will suffice to say that the religious enthusiasm and faith emanating from Jesus proved indeed infectious, His associates borrowing power from Him; that they were not always successful is frankly stated in the story of the epileptic boy, which follows the narrative of the Transfiguration (Mark ix. 14–29 ; Matt. xvii. 14–21 ; Luke ix. 37–43).

The directions given to the disciples on this occasion are related in four verses by Mark, at much greater length by Matthew, and more succinctly by Luke, who, however, speaks of *two* missions, that of the Twelve and that of the Seventy-two—a duplication with which we shall deal later. It would be a mistake to think that because Mark's version is the briefest, it is the most authentic ;

the probability is that he contents himself with a mere extract from a written source common to the Synoptists, being less concerned with the detailed instructions which the emissaries were to observe than with the fact that they were despatched. That this longer document contained genuine elements, deriving from Jesus Himself, is not to be disputed; on the other hand one would hardly contend that the exhaustive rules given in Matthew's version are from first to last authentic, though a strict separation between the original injunctions and later additions made to them is impossible.

When we read that the disciples are expressly forbidden to carry on their activity among gentiles or even Samaritans, we must attribute that prohibition, not to a narrow and exclusive spirit, but to the Lord's underlying conviction that the time is so short that the apostles will not have completed their mission to Israel before the advent of the Son of man. While the Kingdom no doubt implies the Messiah, it is the former only which they are bidden to proclaim, probably reinforcing their announcement by scriptural proofs, as well as by those acts of healing which seemed so clearly to tell of the Kingdom as all but present. According to Mark and Luke the disciples were to take no money with them; in Matthew this is altered into a prohibition to *earn* money, *i.e.*, to exercise their healing ministry for gain—an admonition which perhaps points to abuses that crept into the Church in later days. Their equipment was to be of the simplest, and to include neither food nor money; it is, however, to be noticed that whereas the original instructions forbade the missioners the possession of even shoes or staff, Mark mitigated this severity, which could no longer be practised once the mission had grown beyond the confines of Palestine. All they were allowed to claim in return for their labours was hospitality; and in accepting this they were to be guided by the worthiness of their prospective host, not by the comfort or luxury he might be able to offer them. Their salute of peace—considered not as an empty courtesy, but as conferring actual benefit—was to be bestowed only upon the worthy, and to be withdrawn from the unworthy. In a locality where they met with no receptiveness, they were to waste no time in persuasion—time which was all too scanty, all too precious—but to break off relations quickly and decisively: the words, "Verily, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city," are not a malediction, but intended simply as a statement of fact—the Judgment was fast

approaching, and those who would not prepare for it must take the consequences.

So far we can conceive of Jesus Himself speaking to those whom He was about to send forth ; but when we come to specific predictions of their being delivered up to councils, scourged in synagogues, and brought before governors and kings, with the injunction that when they are persecuted in one city, they are to flee into the next, we are too much reminded of the vicissitudes experienced by St. Paul to regard these words as spoken by Jesus ; He who was expecting the consummation in a matter of weeks or months at most, was not thinking beyond the term which He felt assured the present age would last.

Much more authentic is the ring of the exhortations to courage, fearless confidence, and absolute loyalty, which follow in Matthew's Gospel (x. 24 ff.), while in Luke they occur in different connections. The disciples are admonished to speak forth boldly in public what they have learned in the privacy of personal intercourse with their Master (*cf.* Luke xii. 2, 3). They are told not to be afraid of those who can only kill the body but not the soul—or, as Luke gives this saying, in what is perhaps a more primitive form, they are to fear Him only who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell (*cf.* Luke xii. 4, 5). Once more, they are exhorted not to be afraid, but to remember that the Father, in whose hand they are, extends His care even to sparrows, whilst, as for them, their very hairs are numbered (*cf.* Luke xii. 6, 7). Those who confess Him, Jesus will confess—those who deny Him, He will deny, before the Father (*cf.* Luke xii. 8, 9; Mark viii. 38). Let them not think that He has come to bring peace, but rather a sword (*cf.* Luke xii. 51) : He knows that the new principle He is proclaiming must cause strife, sever many bonds, kindle a fire on the earth—that is not to be helped, has to be recognized, and submitted to. Not even the dearest ties may be invoked to restrain a man from following Him (*cf.* Luke xiv. 25–27) ; if it is a question of choosing between loyalty to Him and family affection, the claims of blood must be sacrificed—a terribly hard saying, but He who demanded such a sacrifice had Himself made it. Finally, He pronounces the grand assurance that whosoever should receive His emissaries was receiving Him, and whoso received Him received the One who had sent Him. All those words breathe a supreme boldness, a supreme self-confidence, a supreme consciousness of a unique mission, a sternness which in the face of the most tremendous issues has no room for mere sentiment, for the idyllic and amiable, for the decorative and

æsthetic: they are the words of a Hero, words in earnest, fierily alive like the molten metal hurled at white heat from unseen depths through the crater of a volcano. There is no possibility of our understanding this Man, until we rid ourselves of the sentimental fiction of the "gentle Jesus."

It remains to refer to the circumstance, already mentioned, that Luke, in addition to the mission of the Twelve, has a mission of "seventy and two other," and records the directions addressed to them by the Lord (Luke x. 1–16). These, however, are substantially identical with the instructions given, according to Matthew, to the Twelve, the probable explanation being, not that there were two such missions, but that Luke, like Matthew, seems to have found two versions of one and the same mission in circulation; but that whereas Matthew combined these materials into one address, delivered to the Twelve, Luke imagined that the two versions referred to separate occasions. Doubtless, there was only one mission; that Jesus should have despatched a second one, on a larger scale than the first, at a time when He was already on the way to Jerusalem (Luke ix. 51) is quite incredible. Seventy-two, the number given in some of the most ancient manuscripts, probably meant that, according to the tradition, six were sent to each tribe of Israel; a later time, which no longer understood the significance of the original number, altered it into seventy, with the intention of hinting at a *universal* mission, seventy being the supposed number of the nations inhabiting the earth.

There can be no doubt in our minds, as we read these narratives, as to the extreme importance which Jesus Himself attached to the sending forth of these heralds of the Kingdom, whose very title of apostles—*i.e.*, emissaries—was derived from this episode. It is the more disappointing, in view of the unusual solemnity which marked the occasion of their departure, and the great expectations which accompanied them, that we are told nothing in detail of what they achieved, nor have we any clue to the duration of their absence. We are told by Mark in the baldest and most perfunctory way that the apostles "went out and preached that men should repent," performing many cures and exorcisms (vi. 12, 13), and a little later in the same chapter, that they "gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, whatsoever they had done and taught" (*ib.* verses 30, 31). To cover up this gap, and his evident ignorance of what took place in the interval, the Evangelist inserts between the departure of the Twelve and their return the romantic story of the Baptist's

death ; but that is all. Luke merely echoes (ix. 6, 10) the scanty information given by Mark—which is in effect no information at all—while the next sentence after the despatch of the Seventy-two records their return " with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in thy name " (x. 17), which really does not tell us anything about the results which had attended their one historic purpose, viz., the preaching of repentance in view of the nearness of the end. Matthew, finally, solves the problem by never mentioning the return of the disciples at all ; he introduces them again in the following chapter in their Master's company, as though nothing had happened in between.

We cannot escape the impression that all this amounts to an anti-climax—that had there been more to record, it would have been recorded ; and it is difficult to avoid the inference that this great and greatly-conceived enterprise achieved but a meagre and qualified success. The truth is probably that the time was too short, the task too great, the forces sent to accomplish it too imperfectly trained, as we may gather from everything that happened later on ; and so far from Jesus having, as Luke says (x. 21) " in that same hour," viz., on the return of the disciples, " rejoiced in the Holy Spirit "—an incident which Matthew (xi. 25 ff.) gives in a different connection—Mark's plain account (vi. 31) deserves more credence, according to which the Lord's one concern was to retire with the disciples for rest, and doubtless to review the situation. If this expedition had proved disappointing in its effects—and that seems the true reading of the facts—a change of plans might become necessary, and that forthwith.

Such a change, moreover, or the expediency of it, is likely to have suggested itself at that time owing to a new circumstance which may well have been in part the result—though an unforeseen and unwelcome one—of the mission of the Twelve. Possibly it was owing to this enlarged activity—possibly to the crude way in which the disciples preached the coming Kingdom in connection with the name of Jesus—that Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee,[1] began to take an uneasy and far from benevolent interest in the new movement (Mark vi. 14, 15 ; Matt. xiv. 1, 2 ; Luke ix. 7–9). Residing as he did at Tiberias, a short distance from the principal scenes of the Lord's activity, and amply provided with channels of information, he could not have failed to hear

[1] Mark erroneously calls him " king Herod," the title borne by his father, Herod the Great.

about Jesus from the very beginning; but at this point he seems to have become alarmed at the growth of this propaganda and its possible outcome. It is not impossible, though rather less than more probable, that Antipas shared the popular superstition which readily believed that Jesus might be John the Baptist come to life again, and in whom "therefore"—*i.e.*, because of the knowledge which he had gained in the mysterious world beyond—"these powers" were energizing. But it is more likely that the "powers" of Jesus, His healings and exorcisms (the like of which are not reported of the Baptist), interested the ruler of Galilee exceedingly little, but that when he heard that this new agitator was once more giving currency to John's perturbing proclamation about the Kingdom of God being at hand, he exclaimed, partly in alarm, partly in annoyance, "This is John the Baptist over again; I beheaded him once, to put an end to his mischievous propaganda, and here we have the same trouble arising afresh." We may take it that Herod was moved, neither by superstition nor by qualms about John's fate, but solely by political considerations; he knew perfectly well that in the people's mind this coming Kingdom had a political complexion, and feared lest at a sign of insurrection the Romans would step in, glad of a pretext for sending him to share the fate of his brother Archelaus, sometime tetrarch of Judæa, whom Augustus had deposed twenty years and more previously.

It has, of course, to be remembered that what happened at the tetrarch's court, and his remarks on current events, were not likely to reach the masses in a form guaranteed against inaccuracy—rather the reverse. If Herod heard that it was being currently asserted that Jesus was none other than John risen from the dead, he might not credit such a rumour, and yet be disquieted by it, as indicating how closely, in the view of the populace, the new movement resembled its predecessor. Luke gives us an inherently probable account of what Herod may have said on hearing the various reports, some of which identified Jesus with John, others with Elijah or one of the ancient prophets: "John I beheaded; but who is this, about whom I hear such things?" (Luke ix. 9).[1] What the Evangelists do not tell us, but what a little reflection serves to make apparent, is that the tetrarch's interest in Jesus was in reality a very alarming symptom—the "interest" of a

[1] The close correspondence between the rumours alleged to have been current in Herod's entourage, and the answer given by the disciples to the Lord's question, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark vi. 14, *cf.* viii. 28; Matt. xiv. 2, *cf.* xvi. 14; Luke ix. 7, 8, *cf. ib.* verse 19) is calculated to raise doubts as to the historical character of the former statements.

tyrannical ruler in some person whom it might be desirable to stop from proclaiming opinions which were likely to give rise to trouble. Such a phrase as " and he sought to see Him," when read in this light, acquires a very sinister significance ; and if Jesus heard of this ominous desire of Herod's, He would naturally, with the recent violent death of the Baptist before His eyes, take it as a warning that at any moment withdrawal from his territories might be necessary. It is a remarkable fact that from this point onwards the action of the Gospel proceeds principally on non-Galilean soil—*i.e.*, outside the tetrarch's jurisdiction—and we shall see that on His last journey to Jerusalem, too, the Lord avoided Herod's domains as much as possible—not from accident, assuredly. The warning which Luke records as having been addressed to Jesus at a later and unlikely juncture—in Samaria, where the tetrarch exercised no authority—" Get thee out, and go hence : for Herod would fain kill thee " (Luke xiii. 31), was probably uttered about this time, *i.e.*, prior to Jesus' withdrawal from Galilee to the eastern shore of the Lake, and as probably expressed the naked truth. That the despot who had had John put to death should now be reported to be making inquiries about Jesus, was a danger-signal, and could be interpreted only as such.

But another personage had a short time previously been making similar inquiries, though with a very different object in view ; this had been none other than the Baptist himself, already imprisoned and, we must presume, on the eve of his death (Matt. xi. 2–19 ; Luke vii. 18–35, xvi. 16). The true order of the events with which we are dealing can only be conjecturally established, under the sole guidance of probability ; Matthew, however, followed either a trustworthy tradition, or made a most happy conjecture of his own, when he placed the episode to which we now turn—viz., the Baptist's message to Jesus—immediately after the sending out of the Twelve, *i.e.*, during their absence from the Master.

John's imprisonment does not seem to have prevented his friends from having access to him, and he had learned from them of the stir which the appearance of Jesus was causing everywhere, the earnestness with which He was preaching the nearness of the Kingdom, the wonderful works to which He Himself had pointed as visible proofs that the Kingdom was already in process of realization. The result of these reports was that in the Baptist's mind—as in Herod's, as in the disciples', as in the minds of the

multitude—the question formed itself, "Who then is this?" John knew that his days were numbered; before he died, he desired to have certainty, and therefore despatched two of his disciples to the Lord, with the momentous interrogation, "Art thou he that cometh, or wait we for another?"

In order to understand what this query meant in the mouth of the Baptist, we must go back a little, and ask what was his own place in the scheme of events as he himself and his contemporaries viewed it.[1] The Evangelists, of course, regarded him as the destined forerunner of the Messiah all along, and his question to Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh?" is accordingly interpreted by them as equivalent to "Art thou the Christ?" That, however, as explained in an earlier chapter, is to our way of thinking a complete misreading of the position; for not only was there nothing in the manner of our Lord's appearance to suggest that He was the Messiah, but John had never designated himself, or been designated by anyone else, as the forerunner of Messiah, the Elijah who was to usher in the reign of Yahveh.

A word must be said on each of these important points. There was, we observed, nothing in the manner of our Lord's appearance to suggest that He was the Messiah; no one had ever pictured the Messiah in the guise of an itinerant preacher—in fact, His function was not to *preach* the Kingdom, but to *initiate* it. Viewed as the son of David, he was expected to come from Bethlehem—not out of Galilee (John vii. 41, 42)—as a man of war, calling his people to arms against Rome, and leading them to victory; viewed as the Son of man, he was expected to come with the clouds of heaven, surrounded by angel legions, to rout and expel the foreign oppressors. On this ground alone we may dismiss all the stories of Jesus' early recognition as the Messiah, on the strength either of His preaching or His cures, neither of which entered into current messianic conceptions.

And in the second place, John had never claimed to be Messiah's herald, Elijah come back to earth; in preaching the Kingdom, he had announced the nearness of one who would baptize men with the Holy Spirit and with fire, a reference to Joel ii. 28 ff., which was popularly combined with Mal. iv. 5, the promise of Elijah's return—*in other words, John had not pointed to the Messiah at all in his preaching, but to Elijah, who "must first come."* And hearing in his prison in the fortress of Machærus of the mighty deeds of Jesus, his heart thrills with the query, Can this be he?

[1] See chap. ii., pp. 41, 42.

We hold accordingly that when he sent his emissaries to Jesus in the early days of the mission of the Twelve—perhaps it was this which brought the matter to a head—with the question, "Art thou he that cometh?" John meant to ask, "Art thou the Elijah?" and not "Art thou the Messiah?" at all. And we further regard it as highly probable that the Baptist's message of inquiry, if it did not precipitate the crisis, came very near to doing so, and in any case hastened it appreciably. Jesus, by this time, was regarded by many as the promised forerunner, the advance messenger preparing the world for the advent of the Kingdom and the Son of man; and, in His endeavour to define His own position, it is entirely likely that He passed through a phase when He was disposed to assign that part to Himself—the phase in which He still spoke of the Son of man objectively, as of a third person, but yet conceived His own function as closely allied to the Messiah's. As a few drops of some chemical substance poured into a cloudy fluid may clarify the whole, so with the interrogation launched straight at him by John—"Art thou the Elijah, or have we to wait for another?" Thus directly confronted with the problem that had been besetting Him ever since His baptism, Jesus has to reach a mental decision, and that quickly. It is for the moment only a negative decision: as for being the Elijah, in His inmost heart He does not feel that that is His *rôle* in the drama which is hurrying to its climax, and accordingly He does not say so; instead, He bids John's disciples report to their captive master the unmistakable signs of the messianic age—the wonderful cures that are being performed, and the preaching of the good news to the poor—and with that answer, inconclusive, yet containing a hint that the Kingdom is nearer than even the Baptist had dreamed, He dismisses the messengers. Since—this appears to us the implication of the Lord's reply—the signs predicted by Isaiah as marking the actual coming of the Kingdom (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, lxi. 1) are already being fulfilled, *what need to await Elijah now?*

But that is not the end of this incident. John had sent to Jesus, propounding to Him the riddle which had been agitating His own breast for months past—"What is thy part in this drama of the last days?" In His search for an answer Jesus is driven by the irresistible logic of the situation to the counter-query—"And what is John's?" His final solution of that problem is contained in that wonderful address to the multitudes, after the messengers of the Baptist had departed, with its rhythmic structure, its thrice-repeated "What went ye out for to see?"

and its magnificent tribute to John as the greatest of women-born. Was it in hopes of beholding a prophet that they had gone to the banks of Jordan? Indeed, he was more than an ordinary prophet, inasmuch as his relation to the Kingdom was other than theirs.[1] All the prophets of olden times had prophesied of the Kingdom until John: whereas he himself was the fulfilment of the prophecy which was supposed by all to refer to the messenger sent before *Messiah's* face, to prepare his way before him. The truth—so utterly unexpected that it would require an effort on His hearers' part to receive it—was that *John himself was "the Elijah who was to come."* This is assuredly the language, this the manner, of one who is conscious of proclaiming quite a new and startling discovery, an unheard-of interpretation; and such it was. John had asked, "Art thou the coming one (ὁ ἐρχόμενος)?" Jesus answers, "No, but John himself (αὐτός) is the coming one (ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι), the Elijah!"

In those words the Lord approaches the very verge of self-revelation: for if He, Jesus, was *not* the Elijah—if the Baptist, notwithstanding his own implicit and (according to John i. 21) even explicit repudiation of that *rôle, was* the Elijah—what part but one could be assigned to Jesus Himself, viz., that of the One to whose advent the appearance of Elijah was to furnish the prelude? *In pronouncing John the Elijah*—contrary to what anyone else had ever thought or said of the great preacher of repentance—*Jesus expresses the conclusion, which He had at length reached, that He Himself is the Messiah-to-be:* that is to say, it is His own assurance of His messianic office which forces Him to the inference that John was the long-predicted forerunner—an amazingly masterful trans-valuation of values, which He has succeeded, and which no one but Jesus could have succeeded, in imposing on the world.

But not merely was this indirect self-avowal, drawn from Him by the Baptist's inquiry, a mere momentary flash, no sooner witnessed than extinct, but above all it was too unthinkable to be intelligible to His hearers. For the time being, the revelation revealed nothing to anyone. The inference to which His declaration pointed was not drawn. That this rabbi from Nazareth could really mean that He was the Messiah, was past imagining. A prophet, most probably; but the Messiah? They never questioned the claim, because they never conceived of its being made. Later on the words were remembered, and even then only partially understood, because by that time the idea had taken

[1] On "the kingdom taken by violence," see chap. v., p. 84 ff.

root that Jesus had always known Himself to be the Messiah, had from the first appeared as such, had from the outset been hailed by messianic titles. As a matter of fact, He had neither known Himself, nor claimed to be, the Messiah—till then. It was the Baptist's question which had struck the spark from the steel. From that time onward there was a messianic secret; but as yet, thanks to the uncomprehending nature of the crowd, that secret—so nearly, so impetuously, divulged—remained safe, because un-understood.

CHAPTER IX

THE LORD'S SUPPER BY THE LAKE-SIDE

THE mission of the Twelve was in itself a clear indication of the assurance with which Jesus expected "that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear." A later generation could credit Him with the intention to deprecate such expectations (Luke xix. 11); but this is merely an afterthought, prompted by the disappointment of hopes which formed the key-note of the Gospel message as originally proclaimed. On the other hand, such a prediction as that which told the disciples that they would not have gone through the cities of Israel before the coming of the Son of man was an accomplished fact (Matt. x. 23) could not have been subsequently invented, in the face of its non-fulfilment. This saying is self-evidently authentic, and shows that Jesus looked forward to the end of the age in the nearest future.

It is unfortunate that we know nothing of the length of the disciples' missionary expedition—not perhaps a very brief period, in view of the task committed to them—nor of the Lord's own activities during their absence. According to Matthew's arrangement of his material, which, though possibly purely haphazard, possesses a certain inherent plausibility, one of the incidents which happened during this interval was the message of inquiry which John sent to Jesus from his prison, asking Him quite unequivocally whether He claimed to be the forerunner of the Messiah; this publicly delivered message—in effect something like a challenge to Jesus to declare His colours—had led Him, as we saw in our last chapter, by designating John as the forerunner, to identify Himself, by inference, with the Messiah, an identification which marked a culminating point in His inner development. Shortly, perhaps almost immediately, after this episode Herod had put John to death, and was now understood to regard the propaganda led by Jesus, and carried far and wide by His disciples, with uneasy interest, avowing that this was a case of the Baptist over again. If Herod had expressed himself after this fashion, it boded no good to Jesus; for the tetrarch, having just put down one dangerous agitation, was not likely to

allow the result of that step to be frustrated by tolerating another which seemed to be running on the same lines.

On the ground of Herod's presumably hostile intents alone, the wisest step now to be taken by Jesus might be a temporary retirement, not necessarily far away, but just out of reach of Herod's jurisdiction ; to effect this, it was only necessary to cross to the other side of the lake, beyond Galilee proper, into Gaulanitis, the domain of Philip. Just across Jordan, an easy distance from Capernaum, lay the town and territory of Bethsaida. Philip had, with the passion of the Herods for building, raised a fine city on or near the site of the former fishing village, and called it Julias, in honour of the daughter of Cæsar Augustus ; the city itself was purely Greek, but in any of the villages round about—which may have included the original Bethsaida (*cf.* Josephus, *Antt.* xx. 8. 4)—Jesus would be safe from arrest by Antipas, and thither He accordingly withdrew when He heard of John's death (Matt. xiv. 13), just as, after hearing of the Baptist's imprisonment, He had withdrawn into Galilee (*ib.* iv. 12).

There were probably other reasons for this move, which, according to Mark vi. 30, 31 and Luke ix. 10, took place on the disciples' return. Chief among these we would surmise to have been a sense of baffled endeavour, the disappointment of expectations very confidently entertained. Matters had not fallen out as Jesus had anticipated. For one thing, the Elianic office assigned to John on the spur of the moment was hard to reconcile with his judicial murder ; the sanguinary removal of Elijah, the messenger sent before Messiah's face, was a disconcerting fact, and difficult to fit into the messianic scheme. The Lord is indeed reported as saying (Mark ix. 13) that John's fate had been in accord with what was "written" ; this, however, must be taken to mean "in accordance with the decrees of Providence," and not "in fulfilment of a prophecy." The suggestion that what Jesus meant is that Antipas and Herodias had treated John as Ahab and Jezebel had *intended* to treat Elijah is merely a thin-spun ingenuity ; there was nothing in Jewish lore to imply that the herald of the Kingdom would not himself survive to see the Kingdom in.

But in even more direct contrast to the Lord's clearly-expressed expectations of swift developments was the unaccountable tarrying of the new era. The disciples had come back from their expedition with a tale of achievements none too prosperous—or we should have been told more about them—and the premonitory

signs of the Kingdom's advent still lingered. These "birth-pangs" (ὠδῖνες) of the coming age consisted, on the one hand, of extraordinary celestial phenomena (Joel ii. 10, 31, iii. 15; Isa. xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4), and on the other of terrifying terrestrial convulsions (*cf.* Mark xiii. 7, 8; Matt. xxiv. 6–8; Luke xxi. 9–11). These were the things which "must needs come to pass" before the coming of the new order: if, then, that order was "at hand," why were the symptoms so strangely lacking? For the time being, this inexplicable delay, together with the death of the Baptist, and the comparative failure which had attended the disciples' mission, must have been a source of serious perplexity to our Lord, especially in view of the recent ripening of His messianic consciousness. If His activity in sowing the word did not avail to compel the Kingdom to appear,[1] what else must be done or suffered in order that the wheels of destiny might be set in motion, by what act of consecrated violence was the Kingdom to be forcibly brought in? Wanting was—what? Might it not even be—though this is to state in definite form a thought which as yet was probably merely adumbrating itself in the Saviour's soul—might it not be that the only way to accelerate this birth was that the pangs should be borne by the future Messiah Himself, even as that suffering servant of God, of whom the prophet spoke, was wounded for the transgressions, and bruised for the iniquities, of his people, who were healed by his stripes? It was not only for the purpose of placing Himself beyond the reach of Herod's machinations, but in order to face such pressing problems as these, that the Lord would seem at this juncture to have decided on a period of retirement with His disciples—and not as Mark, with a certain pettiness, guesses, because the disciples needed a holiday after their recent exertions, and the crowd did not allow them time even for meals (*cf.* iii. 20).

But now we must deal with a number of very serious difficulties in which this part of the Gospel narrative is embarrassingly rich; and since the first condition for solving difficulties is to state and understand them clearly, our best course will be to give a brief summary of the sections of Mark's Gospel covering this period, viz., chaps. vi. 30–viii. 27.

Mark vi. 30–44. The disciples return, and Jesus sets off with them in a boat for a lonely spot. The people see the departure, and run along the shore, outdistancing the rowers; Jesus, touched

[1] *v.s.*, chap. v., p. 83 ff.

by their eagerness, lands and teaches them "many things." Evening sets in, and, as the multitudes have nothing to eat, the Lord feeds them miraculously—*vi.* 45–52. After this meal, Jesus sends the Apostles towards Bethsaida by boat, while He, having dismissed the crowd, retires to pray. Later on the boat is in difficulties, and Jesus walks on the water and enters the vessel, whereupon the wind drops—*vi.* 53–56. They land, not, however, at Bethsaida, at the north-eastern end of the lake, but at Gennesaret, *i.e.*, on the western, Galilean shore, which Jesus had been anxious to leave. There, after some general healing activity, the emissaries of the Pharisees, sent from Jerusalem (*vii.* 1–23), meet Jesus and make an attack on Him in regard to eating without ceremonial ablutions; this leads to the Lord's radical declaration on clean and unclean—*i.e.*, His complete breach with the Law, which is immediately followed (*vii.* 24–30), by His withdrawal into heathen territory—the regions of Tyre and Sidon in the north. On His returning from there, by way of the Decapolis, to the Lake of Galilee (*vii.* 31–37), we are quite abruptly introduced to a second feeding miracle, performed in an unnamed locality (*viii.* 1–9), whereupon Jesus and the disciples cross to Dalmanutha (*viii.* 10; Magadan, Matt. xv. 39), on the western shore, often identified with Magdala, immediately south of Gennesaret. This is the scene of another onslaught on Jesus by the Pharisees (*viii.* 11–13), taking the form of a demand for a sign from heaven, which Jesus refuses, returning immediately to the eastern side. On the way thither the disciples are warned by the Lord (*viii.* 14–20), against the leaven of the Pharisees, which they strangely misunderstand as a reference to their not having taken any bread with them. Jesus rebukes them for their want of understanding, and presently they reach Bethsaida, their immediate destination, whence they go north, into the regions of Cæsarea Philippi (*viii.* 22–27).

Now in all this confused chronicle of movements and happenings, crossings and re-crossings, the circumstance which at once and inevitably challenges attention is the narration of *two* miraculous feedings in quick succession. That the numbers fed should on one occasion be given as five thousand, on the other as four thousand; that the number of the loaves and fishes said to have been multiplied by the Lord, and that of the baskets filled with the remains, should vary in the two reports; and that each narrative should use a different term for "baskets," cannot conceal the fact that we have here two versions of one original tradition,

both of which Mark found in circulation, and inserted as separate events. It is true that Matthew follows Mark in reporting two feeding miracles, but Matthew likes duplications for their own sake (*cf.* Matt. viii. 28, xx. 29). Luke, on the other hand, with Mark's Gospel before him, relates only one—indeed, the tangled state of Mark's narrative seems to move him to some impatience, for he simply cuts out the sections Mark vi. 45–viii. 26, recording the various lake expeditions and incidents between the feeding of the five thousand and Peter's confession, apparently in despair of the task of straightening out such a coil ; and even John, with his marked *penchant* for miracles, is satisfied with one miraculous meal.

But this is only the most outstanding of a truly remarkable series of parallelisms occurring within the compass of Mark vi. 30–viii. 27. When we find that each feeding miracle is followed by a return of Jesus and the disciples in the boat to the western shore ; that on each occasion their landing is followed by an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees; and that after each of these discussions Jesus leaves Jewish territory for heathen lands, this series of correspondences, as tabulated hereunder, is altogether too complete not to suggest the explanation that the two cycles of events represent alternative accounts of the same period of the Lord's ministry placed side by side by the Evangelist, much as we find " J " and " E " versions of the same legends in Genesis.

Mark vi. 35–*vii.* 31.		*Mark viii.* 1–27
vi. 35–44	Teaching and Feeding the Multitudes	viii. 1–9
vi. 45–53	Return to western shore . .	viii. 10
vii. 1–23	Encounter with Pharisees . .	viii. 11–13
vii. 24–37	Departure from Galilee and stay in heathen territories . . .	viii. 13–ix. 29

An important feature for us to note is that in each of these two narrative cycles the Lord's departure from Galilee—once for the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and once for the northern regions on the east side of Jordan—follows on the heels of a dispute with the Pharisees, who, we gather from Mark vii. 1, had come from Jerusalem on a mission of investigation, *i.e.*, in an official capacity. The inference would be that *both* these encounters with the authorities had ended so unpropitiously for Jesus as to make an immediate withdrawal from Jewish soil advisable. That such a thing should have happened once is believable, and furnishes a key to the actual course of events ; that it should have happened twice is unbelievable, and reduces the course of events to chaos, making the first northern journey motiveless. Both the recorded

collisions with the Pharisees are no doubt historical, but only one of them can have inflicted so serious a reverse on the Lord as to drive Him into exile—an exile which led Him successively, *i.e.*, without intervening return to Galilee, into the regions of Tyre and Sidon and parts of Cæsarea Philippi.

In the present and the following chapter we shall accordingly attempt to present what seems to us a probable, because intelligible, account of what happened from the return of the disciples from their mission to the end of the Galilean ministry.

We are not told by any of the Evangelists where the Twelve, on their return, met with their Master again ; we cannot, of course, assume that they all arrived simultaneously, but the place agreed upon for their reunion was in all likelihood Capernaum. That their homecoming was not in the nature of a triumph, even though they could report a number of successes in healing, we have repeatedly insisted; the very fact that Jesus seems to have urged departure there and then (Mark vi. 31, 32 ; Luke ix. 10)—apparently intended as secret departure—shows that He was anxious and troubled rather than overjoyed. His objective, Bethsaida, was, as we saw, strategically chosen, being just across the Galilean border, easily reached, and offering facilities for visits to and from His adherents in Galilee; thither, then, the Master and His disciples directed their boat.

But they had not proceeded far before they became aware of a crowd running along the shore and overtaking them ; the desire of these people was so obvious—viz., to hear Jesus yet again—that He gave directions to land, probably when they were still some distance from Bethsaida, and proceeded to address this eager audience concerning the Kingdom of God, speaking from the heart, moved as He was by their shepherdless condition. There is no reason to suppose that He had intended to withdraw definitely from popular teaching—only that He meditated a temporary retreat, for the purpose of revising His plans ; and we can well believe that Luke interpreted the mind of the Lord correctly when he tells us (ix. 11) that Jesus " welcomed " the people, although they really interfered with His intentions—a characteristically gracious trait.

Since the records do not say what was the precise nature of the teaching given on that occasion, we certainly have no right to fill the gaps in our knowledge by assuming that this was the probable time and place when this or that precept was uttered ; at the most we may hazard the suggestion that such an experience as this—the spectacle of these men and women who have hastened after

Him, full of an almost pathetic eagerness to listen to His word—might not unnaturally have inspired those wonderful words which Matthew (xi. 28–30) has preserved for us : " Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." That immortal invitation, framed, as its very form shows, in some moment of deep and holy emotion, is at any rate in spirit appropriate to these special circumstances, and breathes that welcome to burdened humanity of which Luke has just spoken, the welcome which our blessed Lord ever holds out to those who are bowed by drudgery or grief.

Jesus is perhaps specially thinking of the " burdens grievous to be borne " which the scribes and Pharisees laid on men's shoulders ; He sees them staggering under the intolerable load of prescriptions and enactments, yet never satisfying their harsh spiritual taskmasters, never gaining rest unto their souls. His heart overflows with pity for these hapless victims of tradition-worship, and He invites them to come to Him, since they long for a rule of life, and He will lay on them a yoke that will not fret or gall, because it is adapted to the bearer's capacity. His attitude is utterly unlike the conscious superiority of the orthodox religionists of His day, who looked down on the common people ; it is from sheer compassion with the multitude that He urges them to exchange the heavy yoke of the scribes for the easy one of the Gospel, the cruel burdens of tradition for the light one of that love which is the fulfilling of the Law.

Thus, as on another occasion, concerning which we have fuller reports (Mark iv. 1–34 ; Matt. xiii. 1–35), the hours sped but too quickly, and presently, as our version exquisitely renders Luke ix. 12, " the day began to wear away." It occurred to the disciples, as a sensible and practical suggestion, that the people had now better be dismissed, and go home to their suppers, while their Master and themselves continued their interrupted voyage to Bethsaida.[1] But Jesus was in an exalted mood that evening (Mark vi. 35–44 ; Matt. xiv. 15–21 ; Luke ix. 12–17 ; John vi. 5–13), a mood of buoyancy strongly contrasting with that in which He had set out, and owing its exaltation to the very fact

[1] Luke is no doubt mistaken in stating that they had reached their destination already, but neither were they a great way from it when they had landed. Nor, on the other hand, must we rashly infer from the description of the place as desert that the people were more than a modest walk from their homes, and at worst it would not have hurt them to have their evening meal an hour or two later.

that He had been addressing an eager and sympathetic audience, whose hearts He felt beating in unison with His own ; and the suggestion of supper inspired Him with a thought which, however strange to us, was natural enough to Him at the time and under the circumstances. He had not long since arrived at the conviction that He was indeed the Messiah, or rather that He, at present in humble guise, was destined to be the Messiah in the near future —how, God would ordain ; once, He had all but declared that conviction, in answer to the Baptist's challenge—since then He had kept it as His inmost secret, which the masses could not understand, for which even His nearest wanted further preparation. But, bound up quite naïvely with His conception of the Messiahship was that of the messianic Supper, the great banquet to be celebrated in the coming Kingdom, when the faithful should eat and drink at Messiah's table (Luke xxii. 30 ; *cf.* Mark xiv. 25 ; Matt. xxvi. 29 ; Luke xxii. 18) ; an eating and drinking which we must understand quite realistically, without attempting to allegorize or spiritualize its meaning. It is in this mood, and with these mental images stimulated to exceptional vividness, that the Lord resolved on a celebration in advance—and not so very much in advance—of that messianic feast, at which He would preside. There was a little food at hand : let the people lie down on the green grass as at tables, in companies, and He would give each of them a fragment, after blessing it—not with a view to satisfying their physical hunger, for these folk were not starving, but distinctly as a symbolical act, prompted by the eschatological form in which the messianic beliefs of the period were clothed.

The feeding of the multitudes is quite simply the Lord's Supper by the lake-side ; and the Lord's Supper is a symbolic representation of the messianic meal to be partaken of in the Kingdom.

The correctness of this interpretation becomes apparent when we compare the language used by Mark in relating this incident with that in which he describes the Lord's action at the last meal with the disciples (xiv. 22). There as here we have the same solemn description, suggestive of a rite—He *took* the loaves, *blessed, broke, gave* of them to those present : and this detailed correspondence, not in the proceedings themselves, but in the Evangelist's description of them, is not accidental. There are strong indications in Mark's Gospel itself that something more than a mere meal was meant. Thus in the episode of Jesus walking on the waves, which follows immediately upon this " breaking of bread " by the sea, we are suddenly told, without any apparent connection, that the disciples " understood not

about the loaves, for their hearts were hardened" (vi. 52). Again, a little later, when the Lord and the disciples cross from Dalmanutha to Bethsaida, and there is that curious conversation about the leaven of the Pharisees, of which the Master has bidden them to beware—a warning in which they quite incomprehensibly see a reference to the question of the bread-supply—they are sharply rebuked by Jesus with the question (viii. 17), "Why reason ye because ye have no bread? do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened?" That they should so have misinterpreted such a phrase is on the face of it quite incredible, though Jesus may have used it on some other occasion: the important feature is that we are yet once more told that they had not understood the significance of that common meal by the northern shore of the Galilean lake. Evidently, then, there was something behind that distribution of fragments of food to the crowd; there was something to be *understood* by it, beyond what was apparent to the senses; in other words, what had happened was symbolic in its significance, and Jesus was disappointed that His intimates should have been so dull as not to see through so transparent a veil.

The one account which frankly recognizes and emphasizes the true character of this meal—*i.e.*, its symbolical character—is that of the Fourth Evangelist; just as the Synoptists tell us that Jesus, in instituting the Lord's Supper on the eve of His Passion in Jerusalem, consecrated the bread and wine with the words, "This is my Body—this is my Blood," the Fourth Evangelist, who deliberately omits this institution, introduces immediately after the feeding of the multitudes a discourse (John vi. 22–59) in which Jesus describes Himself as the Bread from Heaven, the Bread of life, of which men must eat in order to partake of eternal life: "for My flesh is bread indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Here, of course, we have the fully-developed dogma of the Church, and certainly not the words of Jesus; but the Fourth Gospel seizes on the starting-point of that dogma, which was provided by the messianic meal on the banks of the lake, a meal which was *not* a repast for the stilling of physical appetite. There is even a suggestion of the later Johannine and Catholic meaning in Mark viii. 14, where we read that the disciples "forgot to take bread" (ἄρτους); "and they had not in the boat with them more than *one loaf*" (ἄρτον). The second half of the verse which, taken literally, states an irrelevant and even petty detail, seems to hint the idea that they had *Jesus* with them, the only true Bread. That these words represent a later gloss is likely enough;

the important fact to which they point is that this sharing-out of mere particles of food to a company of believers, which had taken place under the solemn evening sky on that grassy plain, meant more than was to be taken in by the senses alone.

It will be asked what becomes, on the view here presented, of the miracle which all the Evangelists relate, the multiplication of loaves and fishes. The answer is that this supernatural feature is by no means essential to the narrative; so far from helping us to understand the occurrence, it is rather in the nature of a hindrance. As a mere tale of the miraculous increase of the means of sustenance, it has its close and clearly recognizable prototype in the Old Testament legend told in connection with the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 42–44:

> And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of corn in his sack. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servant said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? But he said, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith Yahveh, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of Yahveh.

The correspondence is complete—the master's command to set an apparently inadequate supply before a multitude, the disciples' hesitation, the master's insistence, and the supply proving more than sufficient, a quantity of the food being actually left over. In the Gospel story these features represent a secondary development, which merely darkens the true nature of the occurrence; we begin to understand what really happened only when we penetrate through this outer layer, borrowed from the Old Testament.[1]

But that communion-feast by the Galilean shore was to end on a note other than that of peaceful solemnity. In reading Mark's very next words, "And straightway He constrained His disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before Him unto the other side, to Bethsaida,[2] while He Himself sendeth the multitude

[1] In the second narrative of the feeding of the multitudes (Mark viii. 1–9; Matt. xv. 32–38) it is Jesus Himself who first mentions the hungry condition of the people, who, in this version, have been with Him *three* days—a characteristic heightening of marvellous detail.

[2] This passage, together with John xii. 21, which speaks of Bethsaida *of Galilee*, has given rise to the theory of *two* Bethsaidas, Bethsaida-Julias and a Bethsaida on the western shore. But Mark's προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν need not mean what would have been a quite motiveless command to cross back to the region they had just left, but rather to proceed to their original destination. Thus Josephus uses the similar term διαπεραιόω to express a "going across" from Tiberias to Tarichæa. As for John xii. 21, by the time the Fourth Gospel was written, the eastern coast of the lake had become a recognized part of Galilee. The need for a second Bethsaida therefore vanishes, leaving our narrative intelligible.

away" (Mark vi. 45 ; *cf.* Matt. xiv. 22, "till he should send," etc.), we are conscious of some dropped link, of some explanation that is needed, if only we knew where to turn for it. Why did Jesus "straightway constrain" the disciples to re-enter the boat and put off without Him—why this hurry, this peremptory demand to begone at once, while He Himself dealt with the people? The true explanation—true because inherently probable—seems to be once more furnished by the Fourth Evangelist, whose account of these particular events is apparently based upon a fuller than the Marcan tradition.

When we reflect upon the proceedings in which the multitudes had just taken part, after listening to a discourse which could not but breathe the fervent hope of the approaching consummation, we shall understand that their condition, by the time evening fell, must have been one of intense religious excitement. The meaning of the symbolic act they had just witnessed might flash through the minds of some of these people, steeped as they were in eschatological dreams ; in a dim way it would be realized by them that this Man, who had just presided over their feast, was none other than the future Messiah—whereupon a sudden uprush of enthusiasm, a tumultuous demonstration, which it required all the power of Jesus to check. That this is what took place we infer from John vi. 15, where we read that "Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again into the mountain Himself alone." This is the link dropped by Mark ; and we can understand the Lord's evident anxiety to terminate the scene, and to hasten the departure of the disciples, lest they should make common cause with the excited people, and so perhaps precipitate disaster. Not only would an armed rising, such as the populace evidently aimed at, have been a tragic futility, but above all Jesus did not wish to enact the part of the political and military Messiah at all, and for that reason made no declaration of His Messiahship, though we can see that His secret was almost too much for Him. With His followers out of the way, Jesus could dissuade the crowd from its perilous folly ; that He would lose sympathizers in doing so is only too certain. Deeply moved by what had taken place—the day's teaching, the symbolic meal, the unexpected climax—He retired to a neighbouring hill to pray, intending to rejoin His disciples later on at the agreed place of landing, near Bethsaida.

The section which follows (Mark vi. 47–56 ; Matt. xiv. 23–36) is crowded with difficulties, of which the mere miracle of Jesus

walking on the sea is, so to speak, the least. To begin with, this is yet a second story of the Lord's stilling a storm after a day's teaching (*cf.* Mark iv. 35–41 ; Matt. viii. 23–27 ; Luke viii. 22–25), and in many respects so similar to the first[1] as to suggest the possibility that both are variants of the same tradition, told with some difference in detail. How these traditions varied from mouth to mouth, we can see by comparing Mark's version of this incident with Matthew's, who adds the allegorical feature of Peter, too, walking on the waves so long as he believed in his Lord, but sinking when he lost faith—a legend which meets us in another form in John xxi., where the apostle casts himself into the sea from his fishing-boat on perceiving the Lord standing on the beach. There is inextricable confusion here, and we can only say that Matthew at any rate has run two traditions into one, viz., that of Jesus walking on the lake, and that of Peter casting himself into the lake to swim to the shore.

The next difficulty offered by our narrative is geographical and chronological : the disciples had put off at night—let us say, about ten o'clock—and meet with contrary winds, insomuch that they are in distress, when Jesus comes to them on the water " about the fourth watch of the night," *i.e.*, between three and six o'clock in the morning. But the length of the lake is under thirteen miles, and its greatest width seven and a half miles, and, with an unfavourable wind blowing strongly, the boat, after all those hours, would surely not have been any longer " in the midst of the sea," but have been driven ashore.

Finally we are given to understand, not only that Jesus and the Twelve landed at Gennesaret on the morrow of their hurried departure from Galilee, but that instead of instantly returning to the safety they had sought at Bethsaida, in Philip's territory, they went about " into villages, into cities, and into the country," engaging in a public and extensive healing ministry. But such a course of action would have destroyed the whole sense of our Lord's removal from Herod's territory, the object of which the Evangelists no longer understood. The more credible assumption is that on the night o the communion meal, after persuading the people to disperse, and restoring His soul in solitary prayer, Jesus reached Bethsaida on foot, His disciples having preceded Him by boat. The landing at Gennesaret at any rate, voluntary or involuntary, does not belong to this context ; for it is not to be thought that Jesus, having for urgent reasons sought safety away from Galilee, even if He had been carried back to that coast

[1] *v.s.* chap. vii., pp. 108–110.

by contrary winds, would have resumed His activity there on the very next day, and continued to go about in that danger-zone until His collision with the commission of inquiry from Jerusalem.

But whenever the Lord's next visit to the western shore took place, we can hardly doubt that some incident occurred on the night of that lake-side eucharist, which gave rise to the legend of His walking on the waves. What exactly was the nature of this occurrence we shall never know ; the following hypothesis, however, furnishes at least a not impossible explanation. Jesus, as we saw, had sent the disciples to their place of destination in advance, while He Himself remained behind to pacify the crowd, and then refresh Himself in communion with His Father, after which He intended to follow them on foot. For some reason—any one out of a dozen—their rowing had made poor progress : it is conceivable, *e.g.*, that after their first start they had to put back, having forgotten someone's belongings on the beach—such things happen every day—and that, when they began to ply their oars again, the wind really was unfavourable, and hindered them considerably. By that time (John vi. 17) it had grown dark and misty, and they are none too sure of their bearings. Being in a good deal of perplexity, they see through the shifting mists what looks like a figure about to pass them (Mark vi. 48) ; they peer more anxiously into the darkness, and perceive that it is Jesus "alone on the land" (*ib.* vi. 47), walking along the beach, as He had intended to do from the first. There is nothing more deceptive than distance on the water by night ; it is easy to imagine oneself half a mile from the shore one moment, and the next to see a clump of trees or a boat-house looming ghostlily in close proximity. The disciples thought themselves still far from the land, and when they saw the figure of Jesus making as if to pass them, at quite a moderate distance, they " supposed that it was an apparition, and cried out." But He, becoming aware of their nearness, and also their fright, called out, " Do not be afraid, it is I." " And straightway," so the Fourth Gospel concludes the story, " the boat was at the land whither they were going " (John vi. 21). Doubtless the Fourth Evangelist relates this detail as adding to the miraculous nature of the event—not only had Jesus walked on the sea, and entered the boat when it was between two and three miles from land, but the moment He did so, the vessel's keel grated on the sand ; as a matter of fact, however, this specially miraculous detail supplies the entirely non-miraculous explanation. Unwittingly the rowers had drawn quite near to the place of landing previously agreed upon ; Jesus, walking by the lake-side,

had reached the appointed spot about the same time, and by calling out showed them where they were, and where to moor their boat.

But whether this was or was not the way in which the matter fell out—whether, as is urged by some, there was a genuine apparition of Jesus to His disciples, a psychic phenomenon explicable by telepathy, or such a natural sequence of events as we have surmised—the Master and the Twelve spent that night in the territory of Bethsaida, out of reach of any mischief which Herod Antipas might be plotting ; and in the safety of that region they sojourned the following days or weeks.

CHAPTER X

APPARENT FAILURE : I

In the quiet and security of Bethsaida, Jesus found time and leisure for reviewing a situation which various causes, already enumerated, were contributing to render an anxious one. The summer had come, the harvest was ended, but the Kingdom, so confidently predicted as at hand, still lingered. It would seem that some condition had yet to be fulfilled, some forcible step to be taken, in order to bring in the deferred consummation. It was probably in these days of retirement on the eastern side of Jordan that the Lord finally formulated in His own mind the *rôle* that was to be His in the great drama of Redemption ; it was at this juncture, *i.e.*, that He made that application of the current conception of the messianic birth-pangs to His own Person, which meant that He Himself must pass through suffering and death ere He could reappear as the Messiah and usher in the Kingdom. Whether He believed that His sacrifice would alone suffice—as it were a ransom paid to fate for the accomplishment of a supreme aim—or whether He imagined that His death would be the signal for the unloosing of those final woes which, according to popular belief, must precede the new era, it is impossible to say ; probably He inclined now to one, now to the other of these views. So much is certain, that it grew increasingly clear to Him that He had a baptism to be baptized with, a baptism of blood—that was the personal side of the matter ; but He also saw that He had come to cast fire upon the earth, was impatient to see it kindled—that was the wider aspect, the struggle and suffering, the inevitable division and strife, without which the Kingdom would not and could not come (Luke xii. 49–53).

It is not suggested that all this presented itself to Jesus in a flash, as a sudden revelation or intuition ; it is far more likely that His views developed point by point, under the influence of the events themselves. In one sense, indeed, the thought of His own death as a necessary step in the march of those events could not but occur to Him as soon as He had identified Himself with the coming Messiah. For it must be understood that even to the

last His conception of His own Messiahship was strictly "futurist": He was not the Messiah there and then, but would return in that capacity, as the Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven, to inaugurate the Kingdom. *But if He was thus to "come," He must first "go," i.e., pass through death, and then, in His return, be manifested as the Christ.* It was "by the resurrection" that He would be "declared to be the Son of God"—*i.e.*, the Messiah—"with power" (Rom. i. 4). Hence He must, as a preliminary step, "accomplish His decease" (Luke ix. 31), not in the sense of being overtaken by a tragic fate, but as one who Himself directs His fate by a chosen path to a chosen end.

Death was thus for Jesus in any case the almost unalterable condition by which alone His Messiahship could become actual. But the further inference, viz., that His own sufferings should bring in the Kingdom, that He must endure humiliation and agony and the pangs of death on His brethren's behalf, in order to compass their salvation—the thought of a suffering Saviour, in fact—was the Lord's own contribution to the great subject, His own solution of the problem of redemption.[1] Welding the image of the messianic Son of man coming down from heaven with that of the suffering Servant who was bruised for His people's transgressions, and identifying Himself with both, Jesus was determined that the Kingdom should come, though He must die to remove the obstacles which hindered it from appearing. One cannot but stay to marvel at the tremendous energy with which the Lord moulded events, persons, ancient oracles into the service of His messianic scheme, like so much metal molten in the heat of His intense enthusiasm. John had not come as the Elijah at all; but Jesus, in pursuance of His messianic idea, proclaimed him the Elijah, and the stamp of that declaration remains to this day. And the second Isaiah never thought of the Messiah when he wrote of that unnamed one who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"; but Jesus decreed that these words should be a messianic prophecy referring to Himself, and has *made* them so. These are the acts, not of the idyllic and slightly ineffective Figure of popular imagination, but of a mighty and masterful Personage bending circumstances to His ends, of the passionate Lover of the Kingdom, resolved to take it by force.

Of any outward events which marked that stay across the border we cannot speak with any degree of certainty; perhaps we may assign to it—for Mark's "order" in regard to this central period

[1] *v.s.* chap. vi., pp. 103–104.

is, as we already saw, best described as disorder—the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida which he relates in chap. viii. 22–26. But it is just as likely that this cure belongs to the Galilean period; it is even possible that we are dealing in this particular anecdote not with any actual occurrence, but with a symbolic legend, inserted in Mark's Gospel by an editorial hand after the composition of the other Synoptics, from which it is absent. This story, like that which relates the cure of the deaf stammerer in the Decapolis (Mark vii. 31–37), is peculiar to the Second Gospel, and there are certain features common to both which set them in a category by themselves. In neither instance is there any mention of an unclean spirit as the cause of the disease; in neither does Jesus proceed by means of exorcism. Each patient is brought to the Lord with the request that He should touch him; each cure is performed in privacy, almost secrecy, Jesus taking the sufferer "aside from the multitude" (vii. 33), "away from the village" (viii. 22); in each case there is a medicinal use of saliva, with which Jesus moistens the tongue of the stammerer and the eyes of the blind man, enabling the one to speak, and the other to see. With so many and well-marked peculiarities arresting our attention, it is difficult to escape the impression that these two narratives represent a separate and probably later strand of tradition. To open the eyes of the blind and to unstop the ears of the deaf was, of course, a well-known metaphorical phrase (*cf.* Isa. xxxv. 5), referring to the restoration of spiritual sight and hearing; and possibly the story of a heathen—for the Decapolis was heathen territory—having his ears opened by Jesus was a figurative reference to the gentile mission of a later day. Similarly, the gradual recovery of the blind man, who at first saw men "as trees walking," and was fully restored only after Jesus had laid His hands upon his eyes, may not be a historical reminiscence, but a symbolic representation of the gradual enlightenment of the disciples, whose initial dullness of vision tradition loved to emphasize. We may compare this story with the purely symbolical narrative in John ix. of the man blind from birth, who receives his sight from Christ, the Light of the world, and whose case is contrasted with that of the Pharisees, whose spiritual blindness is wilful, and due to sin.

If we wish to measure the contrast between these two acts of healing and the familiar and authentic method of Jesus, we cannot do better than glance at an episode which Mark, indeed, relates in a different context, but which we may consider at this

point, if only because Mark's setting is manifestly quite inappropriate for it, viz., the cure of the epileptic boy (Mark ix. 14–29 ; *cf.* Matt. xvii. 14–20, Luke ix. 37–43*a*). As Mark tells the story, this occurrence took place immediately after the Transfiguration, and in the region of Cæsarea Philippi ; but the briefest reflection suffices to show that the Evangelist's allocation of the incident, though not motiveless, is quite impossible.

Jesus, we read, on descending from the mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, comes upon a concourse of people, comprising a number of scribes, who are busily " questioning," *i.e.*, discussing some issue by means of question and answer ; this multitude surrounds an inner group, consisting of the rest of the disciples, a " demoniac " boy, and his father. The disciples have been trying to cure the lad by exorcism, but have failed, notwithstanding the " authority over the unclean spirits " which their Lord is supposed to have given them (*cf.* chap. vi. 7), and the successes they had achieved during their mission ; and doubtless the scribes are improving the occasion by calling that authority in question. The father, in despair, turns from the disciples to their renowned Master, who arrives just in time. Mark narrates what followed in very great detail ; the boy's father, on being questioned by the Lord, relates the symptoms of the disease in a very graphic manner—symptoms which point plainly to epilepsy of a kind in which terrifying convulsions alternate with complete apathy. Once more we are struck by the emphasis Jesus places upon faith, as a practically irresistible power. " If thou canst do anything," says the distressed parent, " have compassion on us, and help us." " If thou canst ! " Jesus rejoins : " all things are possible to him that believeth," and with a mighty word of command He " rebukes " the unclean spirit and bids it depart from the boy, who is thrown into violent spasms, and sinks down in a deathlike swoon, from which he is subsequently brought round, and handed over to his father. It would be useless to debate whether this was a permanent cure, or even a cure at all ; we can see only the regular course of an epileptic fit, followed by the unconsciousness and gradual recovery which usually succeed such a paroxysm.

More perhaps has been read into the words attributed to the father, " I believe ; help thou mine unbelief," than they will bear. After all, this is not a case parallel to those in which a patient's own faith is described by the Lord as the curative agent, nor is it suggested that the father's belief in the power of Jesus either effected or affected the boy's recovery.

Of very doubtful historicity is the statement that afterwards, when Jesus had gone into the house, the disciples asked Him why they had been unable to exorcise the demon, whereupon He replies, "This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer." These private explanations to the disciples are a recognized device of either the Evangelist's or an editor's (*cf.* iv. 10, "When He was alone"; iv. 34, "Privately to His own disciples"; vii. 17, "When He was entered into the house"), to introduce an edifying afterthought of dubious appropriateness or authenticity. In the present instance we notice that Jesus had simply pronounced the usual formula of expulsion, without recourse to prayer.

But while no doubt the main incident happened very much as Mark relates it, we repeat that in his setting it is impossible. That setting is the region round Cæsarea Philippi. But Cæsarea was situated in the extreme north of Palestine, two days' journey from Bethsaida. Jesus had withdrawn to this district, which was not Jewish at all, and no doubt He had done so for that very reason: from whence, then, in that gentile environment, the sudden appearance of a great multitude of people keenly interested in the Lord and His activity? How is it that His ministry is apparently in progress? And what, in particular, are scribes doing in those parts?[1] There is no escaping the conclusion that this anecdote has strayed from its proper place in the record, and that it presupposes another background, viz., the familiar scene of the Galilean ministry; the incident most probably occurred before that ministry suffered check and interruption, and may have occurred even before the mission of the Twelve.

Nevertheless its introduction by Mark immediately after the Transfiguration is not accidental. There was a constant tendency to model the evangelic tradition on Old Testament prototypes, and such a tendency is here recognizably at work. Just as Moses (Exod. xxxii.) on descending from Mount Sinai after communing with Yahveh straightway encounters an unruly crowd which his vicegerent, Aaron, had been unable to restrain, so Jesus on coming down from the mount of Transfiguration, finds this seething, doubting multitude, and His disciples similarly powerless. The Evangelist, in inserting the story of the epileptic boy's cure at so unlikely a juncture, simply desires to establish as complete an analogy as possible between Moses, the bringer of the old covenant, and Jesus, the Giver of the new.

[1] Both Matthew and Luke delete the presence of the scribes, no doubt from a perception of the incongruity of this feature.

From glancing at this fragment, to which it is impossible to assign its rightful place in the sequence of events, but which Mark certainly places altogether out of its natural surroundings, we turn once more to the Lord's interim sojourn in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida.

If, for more reasons than one, a temporary withdrawal from the western coast of the lake had become desirable for Him—if in particular He felt that it was necessary to re-examine His position and prospects, and to devise a new and more vigorous plan of action to hasten the advent of the Kingdom—it is by no means to be imagined that the transfer of His headquarters from Capernaum to a spot just the other side of Jordan entailed the total interruption of communications between Himself and His Galilean adherents ; indeed, it was not intended to have any such consequences. Separated from Galilee proper by only a political boundary, Jesus remained within easy hail of His followers ; and anyone who has had occasion, say, to cross in a rowing-boat from Switzerland into France on the Lake of Geneva, or from Italy into Switzerland on Lake Maggiore, will not need to be told that such artificial frontiers do not prevent a lively intercourse between the populations on either side. Jesus, having temporarily removed from the western to the northern shore of the lake, was near enough to receive visits from the friends He had left behind, to despatch emissaries, and to risk occasional brief excursions to the scenes of His recent activity.

Indeed, the very nearness of those localities to His place of retirement would make it impossible for one of the naturally active and buoyant temperament of the Lord to refrain from such excursions for any length of time. All along the west coast townships and villages familiar to Jesus, and full of associations for Him, were visible across that sheet of water, flashing invitations to the other side, to which He would have been less than human not to yield from time to time. Faithful adherents would advise Him when to keep away—viz., if there were any rumours of danger from Herod and his minions ; and at worst it was always possible, at the approach of a menace from that quarter, quickly to embark, and make for safety at Bethsaida. Doubtless there were many such expeditions, accompanied by incidents of preaching and healing, and quite impossible to keep separate in recollection ; but two of them led to encounters which were to have important consequences.

On one occasion (Mark viii. 10–13 ; Matt. xv. 39*b*–xvi. 4 ;

cf. Matt. xii. 38–42 ; Luke xi. 16, 29–32 ; *cf.* John vi. 30, 66) Jesus and the disciples had crossed to what Mark calls the parts of Dalmanutha, and Matthew the borders of Magadan, both tentatively identified with Magdala. We know nothing of the object or the duration of that visit, but only that it was utilized by the Pharisees for the purpose of a challenge which was, so they intended, to put the pretensions of this prophet of the Kingdom's nearness once for all to the test, and that in the eyes of the people themselves. It was understood by all that the end of the age was to be announced by terrifying phenomena in the heavens ; when the great and terrible Day of the Lord was at hand, sun and moon would be darkened, and the stars would withdraw their shining, the sun would be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood—such were the definite statements of Joel the prophet (ii. 10, 31, iii. 15), and universally believed. If, then, Jesus was justified in proclaiming that Day as nigh, His opponents urged, let Him " show " them that any of these unfailing " signs " was as a matter of fact to be seen in the sky. If He could point to such proofs, they would admit Him in the right ; on the other hand, failing His ability to do so, how could they believe that the great consummation was indeed imminent ?

The story of this collision was current in two versions, Mark's and that of " Q," the written source followed by Matthew and Luke ; Matthew accordingly uses both, and tells the incident as if it had happened twice, a mistake which Luke avoids, though he uses both sources, and combines them. It may be taken for granted that when Matt. xii. 38 reports the Pharisees as saying, " We would see a sign from thee," they are not asking the Lord to perform a miracle, but refer to the well-understood heavenly phenomena which were to usher in the last days.

It has to be confessed that from the standpoint of current eschatological expectation—which in the main was shared by Jesus Himself—the Pharisees were in a strong position ; and it is probable enough, as we hinted in our last chapter, that the non-appearance of these very phenomena had caused Him no little anxiety, and was driving Him to ask Himself what conditions there were still unfulfilled, that hindered the promised signs from becoming apparent. The challenge now addressed to Him, possibly with outward courtesy, could not have been unforeseen ; nevertheless, it was most difficult to meet, as we can gather from the various rejoinders ascribed to the Lord by the Synoptists.

The one point in which all our witnesses agree is His categorical

declaration—which according to Mark constituted the whole of His answer—that no sign should be given to this generation, whose demand for such a proof He strongly upbraids. According to Matthew and Luke He met the Pharisees' request for a sign in the sky by reminding the audience that there were certain indications of coming events to be seen in the heavens, which they all could read, viz., weather symptoms : how strange that His questioners could not read the equally unmistakable signs of the times, all of which presaged the approach of the great world-crisis which He was proclaiming ! His inner assurance of the fast-gathering storm rose superior to the absence of those external confirmatory signs on which His opponents laid all the stress ; that they should do so, He contends, only proved their lack of discernment !

Matthew and Luke further report Jesus as saying that the only sign which should be given to His generation was the sign of Jonah, but in their interpretation of that somewhat cryptic phrase the Evangelists diverge. Matthew gives us a piece of purely artificial exegesis, according to which Jonah's three days' sojourn in the whale prefigured the Lord's three days in Hades prior to the Resurrection ; while Luke, with far truer insight, points to Jonah himself as a sign given to the Ninevites—a sign of approaching judgment on the unbelieving and unrepentant, just like that which the Jews were once more receiving in Jesus.

This reference to the Hebrew prophet introduces a passage, quoted by Matthew and Mark from " Q " with practically verbal agreement, in which Jesus declares that the men of Nineveh, who repented at Jonah's preaching, and the queen of the south, who journeyed from afar to listen to Solomon's wisdom, should rise up in the Judgment and condemn the generation which had refused to repent or to listen to a greater than either Jonah or Solomon. There is nothing improbable in Jesus having uttered such a saying either on this or some other occasion, though we shall ascribe the clauses, " And behold, a greater than Jonah is here," " And behold, a greater than Solomon is here," to editorial interpolation. The dread possibility of Israel's rejection was an idea not unknown to the Old Testament ; it was the strongest threat which could be held over the head of the stubborn nation, that if it did not mend its ways, Yahveh who had chosen it might also cast it off, and call another people in Israel's stead to be His own. Jesus could not fail to be familiar with this bitter thought, which He is reported as expressing under the figure of the messianic meal, which people from every quarter of the earth

should share, while the original children of the Kingdom should be " cast forth without " (Luke xiii. 28, 29).

Impressive, however, as are these declarations and denunciations, and impossible as it is for us not to see the Lord, with His glorious inner confidence, towering above His adversaries, there was no denying the fact that the tactical victory rested with the Pharisees. Jesus could not show them such a celestial sign as would have been the irrefutable proof of His central contention : that He unconditionally refused the request addressed to Him as springing from want of faith ; that he pointed to signs of the times as more impressive than signs in the sky ; that He prophesied doom to those who refused to believe His message, could not efface the impression left by the refusal itself, which was no doubt interpreted and exploited in a damaging sense. We can only surmise what happened ; but there is an ominous significance in Mark's and Matthew's brief statement that the Lord, having declined the test proposed by the Pharisees—a test which the multitude probably regarded as thoroughly legitimate—immediately re-embarked and returned to the other side ; and it is at least a happy conjecture on the Evangelist's part that it was during this particular crossing, in the full sense of His disappointment and momentary discomfiture, that the Saviour spoke in warning and complaint of that poisonous leaven of the Pharisees which had begun to work under His very eyes. We cannot doubt that the adroit and possibly semi-official move of the Pharisees gravely injured the Lord, and dimmed His prestige ; and the Fourth Evangelist probably follows a true tradition when he tells us (John vi. 30, 66) that after this incident " many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Defections on a large scale set in, and the star which had erstwhile shone so brightly had begun to wane.

A sufficient comment upon the serious nature of this episode is furnished by the sequel in Mark's Gospel, where the hasty return to Bethsaida is followed at once by the departure of Jesus and the Twelve for the far north, into the non-Jewish region of Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 27). Such a course could be prompted by only one reason, though the Evangelist neither states nor probably was aware of it : if Jesus abruptly renounced His whole activity for the time being—and that is what such a withdrawal meant—it was because He was forced to recognize that that activity had for the time become impossible.

It seems, however, more probable—the order followed by Mc

Mark being, as we have seen, of anything but compelling authority —that the real crisis was precipitated not by this, but by another conflict with the representatives of the Law. About this time the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had felt impelled to send into Galilee a commission of inquiry consisting of scribes and Pharisees—the terms were almost interchangeable—to investigate the movement led by Jesus, and if possible to come to grips with the Leader Himself. Mark, it is true, had mentioned these emissaries already in the opening stages of his narrative (iii. 22 ff.), but it is not likely that the central authorities felt it necessary to despatch them till matters had advanced considerably. With our lack of data, it is impossible to say how the meeting between them and the Lord came about ; it can hardly have been by accident, and it is at least conceivable that such a body, enjoying a status recognized by every loyal Jew, formally cited the Lord to appear before them. It is equally possible that Jesus, as soon as He heard of the official steps that were being taken, decided of His own accord to cross over from Bethsaida and meet the commission, so as to be able at any rate to speak for Himself rather than be condemned in His absence, which, moreover, would have been unfavourably interpreted. Be this as it may, the encounter took place (Mark vii. 1–23 ; Matt. xv. 1–20), and was destined to have most important consequences.

It is to be noted that these ecclesiastical lawyers do not approach the matter by challenging the Master's credentials in declaring the Kingdom to be at hand ; if our supposition is correct, such a procedure was no longer necessary, since His refusal or inability to show a sign from heaven had already seriously undermined His credit with the masses. Instead, they ask Him a question not materially different from one with which He had dealt some time ago, when He had been bidden to explain why His disciples did not keep certain fasts (Mark ii. 18). This time the question is, Why His disciples did not observe the ritual ablutions before meals, according to the tradition of the elders ?[1] To us such a question appears trivial, and so it did already to Mark ; but in reality it was a well-chosen test, involving a whole principle, viz., the equal authority of the traditional with the written Law, for which the scribes and Pharisees contended with the utmost zeal. The Mishna, the oldest portion of the Talmud,

[1] *Cf.* the anecdote in Luke xi. 37–53, according to which Jesus Himself, when invited to dine at a Pharisee's, omitted this rite. It is of course unthinkable that the Lord, having accepted the hospitality of one with whose views on the washing of hands before meat He was quite familiar, should have proceeded to rate His host in the manner reported ; His words belong to another context—in Matthew they occur in the great diatribe against the scribes and Pharisees in chap. xxiii.

devotes no fewer than one hundred and twenty-six chapters to the minutiæ of these purifyings, and of these, four are wholly taken up with the question of the washing of hands before meals—whether such washing was to be limited to the fingers, to embrace the whole hand, or to extend to the elbows, whether the hands were to be held upwards or down, and so forth. The omission of this rite was regarded as equivalent to the grossest immorality, a passage in the Talmud stating that he who despised the ritual washing of hands was to be exterminated from the earth. It will be seen that from their point of view the commissioners had chosen their ground not unskilfully.

Jesus, it is safe to say, merely despised these puerilities of rabbinism, and it is possible that, had He confined Himself to simply repudiating an obligation which had no legal but only traditional sanction, He might have found a good many sympathizers in the crowd. But matters had gone too far for that; He had entered upon a life-and-death struggle with the official religion of His day, and was not going to shirk the issue. He accordingly delivered a tremendous counter-attack upon a type of piety which laid all the stress upon externals, and might co-exist, as He proceeded to show, with every kind of moral obliquity and chicanery. The charge against Him and His was that they neglected the tradition of the elders; He met it with the counter-charge that the scribes and Pharisees utilized their tradition "full well"—*i.e.*, admirably—for the purpose of stultifying and circumventing the Law of God Himself, especially its moral commands. Was there a more fundamental duty than that of honouring father and mother? But if a man was mean enough to desire to evade the obligation of contributing to the support of his aged parents, the tradition enabled him to do so by declaring the portion of his possessions which would have been devoted to that purpose *corban*, *i.e.*, dedicated to the Temple, a legal quibble thus over-riding moral duty. Doubtless, this stroke went home, and may even have made an impression on the general audience; but the very trenchancy of the attack must have doubly embittered the representatives of authority.

But this was only the beginning. So far Jesus had merely asserted the superiority of the Law to the claims set up on behalf of tradition; but now He proceeded, still under the impulse of His indignation with a mean and hollow travesty of religion, to lay down in the hearing of the multitudes a new principle of purity which was in effect subversive, not only of the traditions of the elders, but of the sacred Mosaic code itself, even though it was an

ethical and spiritual interpretation of Lev. xv. 2 ff. Nothing, He declared, could defile a man that entered or touched him from without; only that which proceeded from within the man could defile him. It was too foolish to think that a human being was considered impure in the sight of God because he had tasted this or that kind of food, had touched a corpse, suffered from an illness, or the like; these were only taboos, or at best sanitary instructions, while the real standards of purity and impurity were ethical first and last, and independent of food or ritual observance.

It is quite incredible that the disciples should have asked the Lord in private, as Mark states, to explain this "parable" to them. To begin with, it was not a parable at all, only Mark regards the real parables as enigmatic, esoteric mysteries, and since he treats this new principle of "clean and unclean" as standing in need of an explanation, he calls it a parable. But it does not stand in need of being explained at all, its meaning being quite obvious, and we accordingly regard the disciples' request merely as an editorial device to introduce an elucidation which, while accurate enough, is both unnecessary and unauthentic—a piece of early homiletics.

What, on the other hand, is not merely credible but certain is that the Lord, in making this declaration, which set aside the supreme authority of the Law, had burnt His boats, and entered upon a conflict *à outrance* with the established religion. It is, indeed, probable that it was only in the course of this conflict—which was not necessarily a one day's engagement—that Jesus committed Himself to those bold antithetical statements, "Ye have heard that it was said unto them of old—but I say unto you," which Matthew places in the forefront of His earliest preaching (Matt. v. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43), but which belong assuredly to a more advanced stage, to a time of crisis. Each of these challenges the Law directly, and each opposes to it a higher, more spiritual law, on the sole authority of the Speaker Himself. Not merely murder, but the disposition which in the last resort leads to murder; not merely the unchaste act, but the unchaste thought; not merely false oaths, but all oaths are condemned root and branch, as is all requital of evil with evil, and finally all hatred of enemies.

There never was a more revolutionary proclamation, nor one that breathed a more exalted idealism; but from the scribes' point of view the Lord's definite assumption of His own superiority to Moses was nothing short of blasphemy, nor would they have

very great difficulty in representing it as such to the multitudes, nurtured as they were in the utmost reverence for the very letter of scripture. That it was easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the Law to fall (Luke xvi. 17), was the commonly accepted axiom ; what were plain people to think of a teacher who placed His unauthorized views above the infallible oracles of God ?

Indeed, by explicitly setting aside the Mosaic regulations concerning clean and unclean food, Jesus forfeited a very large proportion of the support and sympathy which had been His till then. To us the emancipating words in which He not merely " made all meats clean," but proclaimed a religion of the heart and of the spirit against one of external rules and superstitious observance, are most preciously significant ; but, in uttering them, He had played into His enemies' hands with a sublime scorn of consequences of which He was immediately to become aware. At one blow, and irreparably, He Himself had terminated His career in Galilee. This radical declaration could not but complete the revulsion of feeling which had already begun to set in. With one who openly despised and defied the Law—one who, let it be remembered, had failed to produce credentials of a mission from on high by means of a sign—it was no longer safe for God-fearing people to consort. By what the emissaries of the Sanhedrin must have deemed the ordering of Providence He had revealed to all and sundry the real significance of His agitation, which was now seen to be aimed at the very citadel of the Jewish religion, the Law of Moses. " To your tents, O Israel," would be the cry of the scribes and Pharisees, and the people, shaken, disconcerted, naturally fickle, accepted the verdict of constituted authority.

There were, of course, those who remembered the Lord's cures of " demoniacs," and who would urge these beneficent acts as evidence of a Divine mission, but His opponents had their answer. " The scribes which came down from Jerusalem "—obviously the same deputation is meant—" said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the demons casteth He out the demons " (Mark iii. 22 ; *cf.* Matt. xii. 24 ; Luke xi. 15). The sheer wickedness of this suggestion moved our Lord to intensest indignation ; its essential stupidity He had no difficulty in demonstrating, for why should Satan cast out Satan, and so rend and weaken his own dominion ? On the contrary, Jesus contended, His successes against the powers of darkness were proof positive of His commission from above : " If I by the finger of God cast out demons,

then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke xi. 20). It was a most cogent rejoinder, and the scribes' attempted explanation of the Lord's works of healing was, as we said, in essence stupid; but stupid inventions and insinuations are not seldom effective, and as a stratagem to frighten the people against having any more to do with the heretical rabbi from Nazareth this one probably served its purpose, and completed the isolation of Jesus. We have no hesitation in placing the episode in this context; it belongs unmistakably to the period of extreme strain, and Mark furnishes an invaluable hint in mentioning that the opponents who made this monstrous accusation against Jesus were none other than the scribes who had come from Jerusalem.

So outraged was the pure spirit of the Saviour by the wilful baseness which attributed to Satan the manifest works of the Holy Ghost that He indignantly described such blasphemy as an unpardonable sin, the only one for which there could be no forgiveness.[1] We may find such words harsh if we like, but they were uttered in the heat of desperate battle by One who in any case was not a calm, serene sage, but a Man of impulsive and impetuous speech, consumed by zeal, unsparing in denunciation, and in controversy terrible. The words about the unpardonable sin flamed forth from His honest wrath, not so much because He had been traduced, but because the Holy Ghost had been blasphemed; they represent a gust of righteous passion, rather than a considered judgment.

But in any case, after His open breach with the Law there was no longer any sojourn for Jesus on Jewish soil; His immediate fate must be exile. To all appearance, the preaching of the Kingdom had ended in *débâcle*. It was a bitter ending to His hopes, and Jesus felt it bitterly. "Would ye also go away?" (John vi. 67) the Fourth Evangelist records Him as saying to the Twelve when the crowd of His former adherents was melting like snow in the sun. But they continued with Him in what He later spoke of as His "trials" (Luke xxii. 28), the period of homeless wanderings which now set in, when He had not where to lay His head.

"And from thence He arose, and went His way into the borders of Tyre and Sidon," Mark relates (vii. 24); and for us, who know

[1] Mark iii. 28 reads, "All their sins shall be forgiven τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων"; Luke xii. 10, on the other hand, says, "Every one who shall speak a word against τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, it shall be forgiven him." Possibly the Marcan passage may have originally read "τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου," *i.e.*, "to a man," the plural form being substituted by a later transcriber. The Lucan version of the saying is unlikely to be authentic.

the meaning of that statement, its simplicity has an eloquence which goes straight to the heart. The Galilean ministry was definitely over; Jesus was going into banishment, into a most uncertain future, and knew it. It was very hard to be rejected where not so long ago the crowds had hung upon His lips; He was tasting defeat and failure, and found them salt as brine. It is in this passing mood of deepest disappointment, with His thoughts bent on distant Tyre and Sidon, toward which He is setting His face, that we can imagine Him uttering lamentations over Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, on account of their unbelief: "For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago" (Matt. xi. 20–24; Luke x. 13–15). It was not Him they rejected, but God, who had sent Him—that was the tragedy.

For the time, as the opponents of the Lord follow that retreating group with their glances, they must have rejoiced at what looked like a complete victory, the crushing of an unwelcome agitation, of which they felt, with a sense of relief, that they had now seen and heard the last.

But they were rejoicing prematurely. Winter was drawing on, and during its months Jesus was to remain hidden in the north, fading into a memory among the fickle, unthinking crowds, whose facile enthusiasms come up in a night, and perish in a night: but winter would be followed by spring—then should His people see Jesus again, His purpose ripened, Himself finally and inflexibly resolved to dare the supreme adventure, even that apparent utter undoing whose true name is triumph, and to suffer that death which is life and immortality.

END OF PART I

INTERLUDE

CHAPTER XI

JESUS AS A TEACHER

With the departure of Jesus and His remnant of faithful disciples from Jewish into heathen territory, a curtain descends upon the world-historic events which we are attempting to trace, a curtain which will not lift again for a number of months.

This notable gap, therefore, may be fitly filled by a sketch—of necessity brief—of that aspect of the Lord's activity which, from His day to ours, has never ceased to shape men's lives and aspirations, viz., His imperishable work as a Teacher.

I

The attempt to write what for want of a more accurate term we still call a life of Christ has been hampered from the earliest times by a twofold difficulty, which has never been successfully surmounted, because to a large extent it is really insurmountable.

There is first of all the difficulty of so combining the various incidents handed down pell-mell by tradition as to make them present an orderly and intelligible sequence. We are not thinking of the truly desperate task of reconciling the Synoptic with the Johannine tradition; but confining ourselves to the former, or even looking for the moment at the earliest of our witnesses alone, we find that it is possible to arrive at widely divergent conclusions as to the value of the Marcan scheme, Professor Burkitt, for example, maintaining that "the narrative of Mark . . . in its main outlines and arrangement fits without violence into the framework of secular circumstances and events," so that "we are not at liberty seriously to disturb" its proportions,[1] while Weinel bluntly states that "the narrative frame into which Mark has fitted the old tradition concerning Jesus is quite defective and disfigured by apologetic tendencies."[2] But when we have devised what we

[1] *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, pp. 103–4.
[2] *Jesus im XIX. Jahrh.*, p. 75.

regard as a plausible, probable arrangement of our material, in which one occurrence seems naturally and convincingly to lead on to the next, we are confronted by the even more formidable task of fitting into this framework of events the recorded sayings of our Lord—to divine, that is, when this or that word was really spoken. This latter task frankly defies accomplishment, and the guesses of the Synoptists are only guesses, often conflicting, the identical utterance being inserted in different settings as we pass from one Gospel to another.

The fact is, and it cannot be too plainly realized, that the facilities of the Synoptic writers in this respect were no better than our own. At the time when they composed their treatises a great many of the teachings of Jesus were still current, but recollection as to when or where He had uttered this or that saying was already hopelessly lost. It is now generally understood that within a generation of His death there existed a written collection of such remembered sayings—the quarry "Q," to which both Matthew and Luke are so largely indebted for the non-Marcan material in their respective Gospels; but which saying belonged to what occasion was, as a rule, not so much matter for surmise as rather past all accurate surmising.

Matthew is so conscious of this that he has recourse to the simple expedient of grouping events and sayings in alternate sections, a fact which even the casual reader cannot fail to notice. Thus, after relating the ministry of John and the Lord's baptism and temptation, he places at the very opening of the public ministry of Jesus the three long chapters of teachings known as the Sermon on the Mount; these are followed by a series of nine miracles and a narration of the general progress of the work of Jesus, after which we have seven parables, and then go on to events again. Clearly, such an arrangement is too artificial to represent the real order in which things happened; Matthew did not know that order, and his mechanical grouping is a confession that he did not know it. Not only is the Sermon on the Mount anything but a consecutive deliverance, made on some one occasion, but some of the most characteristic of the sayings of which it is compiled, those in which the Lord most definitely repudiates the Mosaic law, plainly do not belong to the opening stages of His activity but to that intensely critical phase which preceded His withdrawal from Jewish territory. Matthew, in plunging us straightway *in medias res*, is actuated by strategic and not by historical considerations: here is what he rightly felt to be the programme of the Gospel, and he sets it in the forefront, for his

readers to grasp at once. From his point of view Matthew was perfectly justified, as was Luke in assigning to a supposed Samaritan ministry an embarrassing wealth of surplus material for which he could not find room elsewhere. What we have to bear in mind is that our Gospels were written, in the first place, not as works of history, but of edification, and that purely historical considerations were at most of secondary interest to the sacred writers.

We shall accordingly abandon the ingenious but quite futile guesswork which points to this incident as having given rise to this parable, and to that admonition as having been called forth by that episode ; nor shall we imagine that in seeking to understand Jesus as a Teacher we either can or ought to find some likely niche for every one of His utterances. On the other hand we shall, for the purposes of such an interpretation of the mind of Christ, have to keep certain principles clearly before us.

1. In the first place, and as a quite necessary precaution, we must remember that we have at most only a selection of the Lord's sayings, representing, no doubt, the most priceless gems that fell from His lips, but necessarily incomplete. When we reflect that the whole of the sayings reported in our first three Gospels could be read aloud, with proper impressiveness, in some five or six hours, the inference is fairly obvious ; we can perceive plainly enough what were the topics which predominantly occupied the Master's thoughts, but we can never say with positive certainty that because we find no reference to some other topic in His utterances that He never referred to it. There is nothing to warrant such an argument from silence, which is only the silence of the documents.

2. Again, we must not make the fatal mistake of approaching these fragments of the Lord's deliverances as though they conconstituted a system or a code of legislation. Any attempt to work them up into a " handbook of Christian ethics " is foredoomed to failure, and all such handbooks are artificial productions. Jesus did not set up to be a second Moses, replacing one body of rules and enactments by another ; His teachings bear the mark, not of prepared addresses, but of inspired impromptus, flashes of wayside wisdom called forth by wayside incidents, striking illustrations and similes prompted by some actual situation, memorable epigrams, aphorisms, paradoxes, all of them revealing a highly original, individual mind, but at the farthest possible remove from a systematic treatment of the principles of either faith or conduct. Jesus was not a systematizer ; but the words which He spoke were spirit, and were life.

3. Thirdly, and this is of the highest importance, we shall have to remember all the way through that Jesus devoutly shared the eschatological hopes of His age and people, that He was looking forward to the close-impending dissolution of the world, and that such expectations could not but colour many of His precepts. Here we shall find the principal explanation of not a little that puzzles us in some of His injunctions ; we shall recognize that this and that saying was framed with a view to certain temporal circumstances, or the outcome of certain current presuppositions, and consequently applicable to those circumstances only, but not binding upon those who are quite differently situated, or upon an age which no longer holds the presuppositions in question. Jesus, like every teacher with a living message, addressed Himself to his own generation first and foremost, a generation facing many specific problems to which nothing in our day corresponds ; and we shall accordingly discriminate between what was meant by Him for that particular phase and what remains valid for all time in His teaching.

4. It is perhaps scarcely necessary to add the general caution that we cannot be certain of possessing His words in the form in which He uttered them ; that we can see for ourselves, by comparing Gospel with Gospel, how naturally and inevitably they underwent modification in the process of transmission from mouth to mouth ; that occasionally He was misunderstood even by His original listeners and consequently no doubt often misreported ; and that in any case our Greek Gospels furnish us only with translations, the infallibility of which we have no reason to assume, of the Aramaic dialect which He spoke.

II

The Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels comes before us unmistakably as a teacher, and is so addressed alike by His disciples, by the general public, and even by His opponents ; this point is obscured for us by the English translation, which renders the term by Master, the Revised Version giving teacher as an alternative, whereas it is simply the correct equivalent of the original. It is therefore well to emphasize the fact that where we read the term Master in the Gospels, especially as addressed to Jesus, the Greek, with only three exceptions,[1] reads διδά καλος, διδάσκαλε, and the term actually used was without doubt "Rabbi" (*cf.* John i. 38).

[1] Luke viii. 24 ; ix. 33 uses ἐπιστάτης, "overseer," and Matt. xxiii. 10 καθηγητής, "leader."

In the eyes of His contemporaries, of friends and foes, Jesus was a rabbi, a teacher.[1]

The reason why it is necessary to lay such stress on this elementary fact is that we have witnessed of recent years a very determined endeavour to represent the teaching activity of our Lord as something quite secondary and relatively negligible. The eschatological element in His thought—an element which we have no desire whatever to minimize—has been proclaimed to be the only thing of any significance in His ministry ; so much so that an eminent theologian like the late Father Tyrrell did not scruple to maintain that of the two constituents in the deliverances of Jesus that which he called apocalypticism, viz., the eschatological hope, was the central, and what he called moralism only an incidental one. " What need," he asked, " of a new ethics for an expiring humanity ? " Jesus expected the end of the age in the immediate future ; therefore He could not have troubled much about teaching a way of life ! The answer to such a complete inversion of the facts is the circumstance, just noted, that Jesus was habitually addressed by the people as Teacher ; and the still more overwhelming answer is, of course, the mass of teachings themselves that have come down to us, and which His contemporaries evidently cherished as of exceeding worth, and by no means only of " incidental " interest.

When, therefore, a scholar of such acknowledged eminence as Prof. Burkitt states that " there is nothing in the creed about Christ as a teacher of the higher morality—in fact, He is not spoken of as a teacher at all," he is merely making a statement about the creed, but not about the Christ of history, who, notwithstanding His eschatological prepossessions, was very distinctly a teacher, known as such in his lifetime, and remembered as such after His death. By the time the Gospels came to be written, the fervent hopes of the Kingdom being " at hand " were little more than dying embers, while the Christian ethic burned with a steady flame ; in other words, the perishable perished, the enduring endured.

These preliminaries disposed of, we are now in a position to ask, What were the ruling ideas of Jesus in the domain of conduct ? He is very distinctly and indubitably a teacher of what Prof. Burkitt calls " the higher morality "—precisely because His whole view of morality is based upon religion, upon the fundamental conviction of God's Fatherhood, His care for and good-will toward the individual. This conviction was peculiarly His own ; by which we do

[1] See Note B, on p. 362.

not mean that others did not call God by the name of Father, but that He stood alone in the intensity with which He realized this truth and made it the criterion of all His thinking and acting.

It was this fact—the Divine Fatherhood, and the consequences flowing therefrom once it became a fact, and not merely a theory—which carried Him in instance after instance beyond the limitations of His age and race, rendered Him so unconscious of those limitations that He was not conscious of transcending them. Formally, His scheme of thought was bounded by Jewish nationalism, insomuch that He declared Himself to have been sent to none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. xv. 24 ; *cf.* Matt. x. 6) ; but in reality and in practice these boundaries were overthrown and done away with in the light of the conviction that God was the universal Parent, who maketh His sun to rise not only on Jew and gentile alike, but on the evil and the good (Matt. v. 45), and in the exercise of His bounty ignores far deeper divisions than those of nationality. Nominally the Gospel message, the good tidings of salvation, is solely intended for the Hebrew race (Matt. x. 5)—a thought expressed in such uncompromising terms as leave no room for the posthumous injunction to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. xxviii. 19) ; but whenever Jesus develops His theme, there is never a question of anyone being shut out from the Kingdom on racial grounds ; the standard is simply that of doing good or leaving it undone. Jesus the eschatologist is bounded in His vision by the affairs and aspirations of His own little nation ; Jesus the moralist immediately becomes a universalist, because He preaches a universal ethic, the inevitable inference from the universal Fatherhood of God : " Which of you that is a father. . . . If ye then . . . how much more shall your Heavenly Father . . ." (Matt. vii. 11 ; Luke xi. 13). In such language the narrowness of nationalism is left behind for good and all. Nothing is more striking than that He who had forbidden His disciples to go into any city of the Samaritans was to frame the immortal parable of that " good " Samaritan (Luke x. 25–37), whose practical kindness to the Jew who had fallen among robbers placed Him so infinitely far above the level of the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side.

It is perfectly easy—and perfectly futile—to point to details such as these as instances of self-contradiction and inconsistency ; what we do see in them is the Lord's own specific genius asserting itself victoriously over those less generous conceptions which formed a portion of His inheritance. We see Him at one moment

to all appearance securely fettered in the old views which He had taken over from His environment, as we all do ; the next, He has burst His fetters without a conscious effort, as the butterfly bursts the dead integument of its chrysalis stage and unfolds its wings in the sunshine.

III

And just as Jesus, by dint of His one governing belief, passed beyond the barriers of Jewish nationalism, so the same assurance of God as Father carried Him beyond the confining hedge of the Jewish Law almost ere He was aware of having passed its frontiers. We may take it that there was a period when the Lord conceived himself to be simply resisting the ever-advancing encroachments of tradition (Mark vii. 8–13), while holding fast to the law itself. This has been the experience of reformers over and over again ; they imagine themselves to be merely protesting against the abuses of a system, when in reality there is an irreconcilable difference, a gulf, deep if not yet wide, fixed between the system itself and their essential outlook, a gulf which they may be some time in perceiving, and which their opponents may perceive before they themselves do. It is thus quite possible that Jesus did say, " It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the Law to fail (Luke xvi. 17 ; *cf.* Matt. v. 18). It is quite possible that He did say, " Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven " (Matt. v. 19). It is strongly possible that He protested, genuinely shocked and even distressed, against the suggestion that He had come to destroy the Law (Matt. v. 17). He sincerely believed His quarrel to be only with the tradition-mongering and casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees, whereas He stood for the Divine Law in its purity: " Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said "—and so forth ; that is the attitude of one who means to vindicate God's ordinance against human inventions. When He is asked, " What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? " He immediately and characteristically retorts, " What is written in the law ? How readest thou ? " (Luke x. 25 ff.) This again was merely the inherited attitude which He shared with the great mass of faithful Jews ; and yet His innermost certainty that God was the Father of mankind—resting, no doubt, on the sense of His own unique Sonship to God—led Him by imperceptible degrees first to question, then to criticize, and in the end boldly to reject the Law as the ultimate authority.

From the strictly Jewish point of view, God was the supreme and absolute Ruler and Lawgiver, who had chosen to promulgate these particular statutes, but might quite as easily have given an entirely different set of commandments, and was in any case entitled to implicit, unquestioning obedience to His will, just because it was His will—*Hoc volo, sic jubeo ; sit pro ratione voluntas.* Jesus, on the other hand, saw in the law the will of a Father, not an arbitrary Ruler, the expression of *good*-will toward men, His children ; the law, then, was for men's sake, and to be obeyed because it ministered to their well-being, from which it was a short step to the rejection of any particular enactment that did not promote, but rather came into conflict with, human well-being. The Sabbath was made for man : which meant that it was to be observed so far as it was a help, but that its prescriptions might be set aside unhesitatingly when they became mere burdens, or hindrances to well-doing. Here Jesus stands with one foot across the threshold, not of the Pharisaic tradition, but of the Mosaic Law itself, to which He tenders only a conditional submission. When, however, He made His protest against such established principles as " an eye for an eye " (Matt. v. 38) ; when He laid down the rule, " Swear not at all " (Matt. v. 34) ; still more, when He set aside the whole ritual concerning clean and unclean food (Mark vii. 14–23), He had stepped outside the tabernacle altogether, and He who had once deprecated the breaking of one of these least commandments had grown conscious of the gulf between His way of looking at conduct and the old dispensation, between morality and legality. Once more, it was His own ethical and spiritual genius triumphing over the trammels of that current opinion which He had shared at first, but in due time was bound to shed, even as when that which is perfect is come, that which is imperfect is done away.

And now, from what has been said up to this point, an important inference follows. In considering the teaching of Jesus we shall not feel compelled to regard every reported saying of His as necessarily of the same authority as every other such saying, but recognize that the mind of the great Teacher underwent development ; and we shall judge each one of His utterances by the criterion which He himself applied—and applied as a solvent to the principles of nationalism and legalism—that is, the supreme truth of God's good Fatherhood. Whatever cannot be reconciled with this truth we shall set aside, after due and reverent examination, as unreservedly as He himself set on one side His earlier unquestioning acceptance of every jot and tittle of

the Law. If, for instance, we come upon reported deliverances of His which seem to teach endless punishment in the world to come, we shall in the first place gravely question whether some figurative phrase of His has not been misunderstood by literal-minded hearers ; and in the second, we shall be acting in accordance with the precedent set by Himself if we use His own standard of judgment, and say, " Which of you, being a father," would so treat even a grievously disobedient child ? " If ye then . . . " how much less your Father which is in heaven ? We may thus formally dissent from some saying attributed—and possibly quite wrongly attributed—to our Lord, and yet be in entire agreement with His spirit. For whatever else may be doubtful, it is not doubtful at all that He taught that God's relation to men was that of a parent to His children, and we not only can but must reject anything that is out of harmony with that basal axiom.

IV

We have seen that Jesus, at the commencement of His public career, still shared His people's attitude toward other nations and their veneration for the Mosaic Law ; that traces of this earlier outlook remain among His sayings ; but that He proceeded, probably by very rapid stages, to emancipate Himself from these inherited limitations, substituting universalism for nationalism and morality for legality. We must now go on to glance at certain other features in His teaching which are apt to perplex us until explained, and see if some satisfactory explanation is not available.

The message of every teacher or prophet is inevitably conditioned and coloured by the environment in which he is delivering it, and especially by the opposition he has in view ; even if it is to be " for all time," it must first of all be " for an age "—for *his* age —or he will be beating the air. The man who has nothing to say to his contemporaries is not likely to have anything to say to their descendants. That his contemporaries may spurn his message with ignominy makes no difference ; it has to be addressed to the living present if it is to be received by the unborn future. This simple truism applies to our Lord as much as to any other teacher ; His teaching took the particular form it did because of the particular system of thought He was fighting, and the extreme form in which that system prevailed accounts for the extreme form in which He frequently states His contrary positions. He is not expounding His ideas in the serene tranquillity of some grove of Academe, but in the heat and dust of battle ; the circumstances

under which He spoke did not lend themselves to careful balancing or making allowances for exceptional cases, but called for bold and clear-cut pronouncements. We shall not be going too far if we say that the one-sidedness with which He had to deal could only be redressed *there and then* by a corresponding measure of one-sidedness of His own. Everyone knows how true this is in steering a boat which is making straight for the river's bank : a quick and even violent pull in exactly the opposite direction is the only way to restore the vessel to the middle course, which is the one desired by the steersman. Now we submit that a great many of the teachings of Jesus are to be understood and in practice interpreted on precisely the same principle ; the heightened language, the absolutism, the paradoxical form which meet us again and again in His precepts find here to a large extent their explanation.

Let this suggested principle of interpretation be brought to the test. Pharisaism gave the most explicit sanction to the practice of retaliation, a sanction which encouraged the dangerously vindictive temper of an oppressed people : Jesus, shocked by the manifestations of this vengeful spirit, warns His hearers that even to be angry with his brother brings a man within danger of condemnation (Matt. v. 22), that being the one way in which he can restore the balance. His compatriots were over-ready to return blow for blow ; He commands his followers rather to suffer a second blow than to pay back the first in kind (Matt. v. 39), an injunction which only a literalist would take literally, while He was speaking to Orientals. Pharisaism made divorce easy, and that on quite frivolous grounds : Jesus declares marriage to be indissoluble under any circumstances whatever (Mark x. 5–12), striking a note of such uncompromising absoluteness that by the end of the century, when Matthew composed his Gospel, it was already found necessary to add a qualifying clause to His pronouncement (Matt. v. 32 ; xix. 9). Pharisaism made much of vows and oaths in the routine of everyday life, and naturally the next step was the devising of all sorts of disingenuous subterfuges to absolve a man from his oath, or even to make the oath itself a subterfuge to excuse him from carrying out his natural obligations (Mark vii. 11, 12) : Jesus, aghast at the sanctified deceitfulness which flourished as the result of this bad popular custom, exclaims, " Swear not at all " (Matt. v. 34) Pharisaism, with its doctrine of merits, made the law-observing Jew God's creditor, entitled to demand a *quid pro quo* (Luke xviii. 12) : Jesus on the other hand asks, " Doth the master thank the servant because he did the

things that were commanded? " (Luke xvii. 9) a question the application of which would be obvious to his hearers. Again and again He finds that men decline the sacrifices of discipleship under the plea of home ties, a plea frequently covering self-love or timidity ; whereupon He retorts, " If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple " (Luke xiv. 26). Did the Lord, then, really mean that in order to be a Christian a man must uproot the natural affections and replace them by an unnatural hatred of his nearest? No ; but this and all the declarations we have passed under review are only so many sharp tugs at the steering-rope, extreme efforts called for at the time and under the circumstances, with a view, not of driving the boat into the opposite bank, but of restoring it to midstream. If the result is to impress upon us the fact that there are claims and causes which must take precedence even over the claims of home ; that the name of God should not be invoked save with a deep sense of solemnity ; that so holy a bond as matrimony must not be dissolved, nor armed resistance resorted to, except as last, unhappy necessities, we shall have understood Jesus aright, and the moral gain will be incalculable.

But having said so much, it has also to be recognized, that in some respects, and these the most important, Jesus' root-and-branch antagonism to the prevailing system is not subject to such deductions, but was necessary and justified to the last syllable. The scribes and Pharisees,[1] regarding all the prescriptions of the Law—and no less those added by their tradition—as equally holy and binding, the ceremonial as much as the moral, had in course of time come actually to exalt the ceremonial *above* the moral law ; as Jesus expressed it, they were eager in observing the tithing of the lowliest garden herbs, at the expense of the cardinal virtues—the weightier matters of the Law—judgment and mercy, and faith (Matt. xxiii. 23). Jesus unhesitatingly reverses this valuation, and from the whole body of multifarious commandments selects as the supreme and governing ones the love of God and of one's fellow-man (Mark xii. 29–31). The scribes and Pharisees thought so highly of a scrupulous observance of the Sabbath that they looked upon an act of healing performed on that sacred day as a desecration ; Jesus stoutly maintained that to do good to a fellow-being took precedence over the *minutiæ* of a technical infraction of Sabbath law (Mark iii. 1–6). The scribes and

[1] We are not denying that there were sincere and pious Pharisees, any more than that there were scribes who had been made disciples to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. xiii. 52).

Pharisees placed the whole emphasis upon the outward performance of legal statutes, which might often spring simply from the calculating desire to accumulate merits, so as to have a claim upon Divine repayment with interest, a disposition which in turn was bound to lead to self-complacency, self-righteousness, and downright hypocrisy ; Jesus laid all the stress on rightness of motive, upon the intents of the heart, which might exalt a very imperfect performance in the eyes of God, while in the absence of the right motive the act had no value whatever. The scribes and Pharisees did their so-called " righteous works " for purposes of display and self-glorification, making a show of their devoutness (Matt. xxiii. 5). Jesus looked upon such ostentation, always tinged with hypocrisy, in utter distaste, and commended privacy and reticence in these intimate concerns of the soul (Matt. vi. 5, 6, 18). The scribes and Pharisees were overmuch intent upon the reward which in their view God would measure out on strict book-keeping principles, and in exact proportion to the number of legally commanded deeds they had done ; Jesus is by no means averse to the idea of Divine reward waiting upon faithfulness, loyalty, endurance, and the like, but not only does He shift the emphasis from the legal to the moral field, but His valuation of God-pleasing conduct is qualitative and not quantitative, and St. Paul focuses the truth as it is in Jesus most accurately when he says that love is the fulfilment of the law (Rom. xiii. 10). The scribes and Pharisees held a notion of holiness, of clean and unclean, which was almost wholly concerned with externals, with taboos which declared uncleanness to consist in eating such and such food, or to be contracted by touching a person suffering from such and such a disease ; Jesus, with uncompromising directness, sweeps all this legal lumber away, abrogates the ceremonial law, and makes His great declaration as to cleanness and uncleanness consisting, not in the food, but in the thoughts of a man (Mark vii. 15–23). This—even though, as we saw, a reinterpretation of Lev. xv. 2 ff. —marks a culminating point, as it marked the Lord's final breach with the Law. In all these matters, too, we see Jesus laying down principles which were entirely unaffected by His eschatological expectations, but which are and remain of permanent validity.

V

But now we must pass to another group of His teachings, in which we can almost certainly trace the influence of those expectations ; teachings which had regard to that end of the world as at

present constituted, to which Jesus looked forward as impending in the nearest future. Under this heading we shall first of all glance at His view of property.

In doing so we shall remember first of all that Jesus was a child, not only of His race and age, but also of His class. He was the son of humble people, moving habitually in an environment of poor folk, among the lower strata of a population oppressed and exploited by all above them. As has been well said, "Grinding poverty, bootless labour, anxious care for the morrow, constant suffering from the pride, the greed, and the lust of the well-to-do classes, discontent with the Roman yoke, the Idumean dynasty, and the heavy burdens of taxation, envy and distrust of the rich, the cultured, and the respectable, were characteristic of His social environment. . . . A man cannot have spent most of his life at a carpenter's bench . . . without looking out upon the world through a carpenter's eyes."[1] Making allowance for a touch of exaggeration in the last sentence, it remains true that Jesus lived in a society where wealth almost always exposed its owner, and that too often justly, to suspicions as to the means by which he had accumulated it—usury, extortion, the ways of the tax-farmer and his underlings; where great possessions, therefore, were more or less a moral reproach, and where on the other hand "poor" and "God-fearing" were almost synonymous terms, since the godly were all but sure to be needy. This outlook, which makes itself felt again and again in the Psalms, naturally coloured the thought of Jesus; and if we thus find Him hurling indiscriminate denunciations against the rich and the comfortably off, contrasting their present ease and luxury with their future condition of hunger, want, and worse (Luke vi. 20, 24; xvi. 19–31), we have to take into account the particular phase of civilization, the particular social *milieu*, in which He lived and spoke.

To sum up, when He says, without any qualification whatever, "Blessed are ye poor," "but woe upon you rich," He is speaking in and of and to His own age; when, on the other hand, He points out the deceitfulness of riches, their tendency to harden those who own them, and the temptations inherent in the love of wealth, He proclaims truths and warnings which human nature will never outgrow.

But there is more than this to be said on the subject under debate. In the slight estimation which Jesus placed upon settled possessions of any kind, in the advice not to make material provision for the future, but rather to sell all one owned and give the

[1] N. Schmidt, *Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 254.

proceeds to the poor (Matt. vi. 19 ; Mark x. 21 ; Luke xii. 33), we hear quite plainly the conviction that property was a useless thing to trouble one's self about on the eve of the great supernatural consummation, upon the very verge of the coming age. Again and again, when men have cherished similar expectations, they have acted in a similar manner, giving away or spending recklessly all they had ; but since all such expectations have remained unfulfilled, and since we do not conceive ourselves to be about to witness the expiration of the world as we know it, it is not incumbent on us, as it certainly would be impossible for us, to carry out such precepts.

The same considerations underlie and explain the Lord's attitude to social life in its various aspects—to marriage, the family, the nation, the functions of government, legal tribunals, and the like. All these things, He believes, are coming to an end in the nearest future, together with the dispensation of which they are part and parcel, and are thus of little interest in His eyes ; why lay down any rules with regard to institutions which would presently, as soon as the Kingdom dawned, be done away with and be known no more, even as yesterday when it is past ? In such a frame of mind one would not trouble about invoking a judge to divide an inheritance between one's self and another (Luke xii. 13–15) ; one would not be anxious for the morrow (Matt. vi. 34), seeing that the morrow might bring the end which in any case was at hand ; one would feel it superfluous to resist the evil (Matt. v. 38), or to vindicate one's rights, seeing that the Avenger was at the door (Luke xviii. 7, 8) ; one would submit to the secular demands of the heathen government, whose sands were already running out (Mark xii. 17) ; sooner than go to law about an upper garment one would yield the undergarment too (Matt. v. 40) ; what did it matter, when in a little while all this momentary order, or disorder, of things would be " erased like an error, and cancelled," all the vexatious tangle be straightened out, and all existing conditions be reversed, so that the first should be last, and the last be first?

These, then, are merely temporary elements in the thought of Jesus, which we can without difficulty detach from its permanent kernel ; they envisage conditions wholly different from those under which we live, they are the products of an expectation which we do not share, and, once we realize this, we can say quite simply and without want of reverence that they are not, and cannot be intended to govern our actions, any more than the garb of the Palestine of the first century is adapted for the Britain of the twentieth.

VI

When it thus comes home to us that our Lord did not "legislate" or issue rules we can follow upon questions of social ethics or economics, that He gives us no theories of civil government or international relationships, that we have no saying of His on such subjects as art or science, education or philosophy, we are apt to feel that His teaching is scanty and incomplete to a degree, covering but a small corner of the great field of human life and action. Such a conclusion, however, natural and plausible as it appears on the surface, would nevertheless reveal a serious misunderstanding of what Jesus intended His message to be and to effect. If one wanted a multiplicity, a perfect network of rules covering every conceivable situation in which a man could find himself from the cradle to the grave, the scribes had already exercised all their ingenuity to elaborate and codify just such a system; there were six hundred and thirteen laws, leaving no relationship or emergency unlegislated for; there were thirty-nine kinds of acts forbidden on the Sabbath; there was nothing left to chance that human foresight could provide for or against. But the Lord's intention was not at all to set up a rival system to this one; to its multifariousness He opposed simplicity, to its endless prohibitions two great commandments, and all the way through He addressed himself directly to the individual soul and its duty in the sight of God. God and the soul are His theme, and what, He exclaims, shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? "With magnificent singleness of aim He makes straight for His one object, viz., to bring about man's undivided allegiance to God." The Gospel is not a law of commandments contained in ordinances; Jesus, fully conscious of the abuses which flourished around Him, social, political, economic, "lays hold of the evil which he finds among men, not by this or that excrescence, but by the root. He wishes to create new men; once created, they will live and move in new fashions. He did not consider Himself called to guide earthly and natural institutions along the line of a slow but steadily growing perfection; He had other work to accomplish. And yet He did accomplish this work, too: for Christianity and civilization have gone hand in hand."[1]

A religious teaching which is thus addressed to the individual soul may easily degenerate into a barren pietism; the essential healthiness of Jesus' outlook, His human interests, His strong sense of fellowship with men, warded off any such danger. For

[1] Schrenck, *Jesus and His Teaching*, p. 166.

He sees the individual always in relation to his fellow-individuals, whether as the member of a household, as employer or employed, conferring a benefit like the Good Samaritan or receiving it like the man whom he befriended, and so on, in every variety of relationships. And the very fact that, next to the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," He places "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," not as secondary in importance, but as "like unto it," proves how far He was from losing Himself in that spiritual egoism which is solely intent on saving its own soul, no matter what may be the fate of others here or hereafter. When Jesus, in the judgment discourse (Matt. xxv. 31–46), makes entrance to the Kingdom dependent on simple practical kindliness, when He proclaims as the standard, "Inasmuch as ye did it—inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these," He does more to place human relations on a sound basis than by an elaborate code, providing minutely for this special case or that special category.

On one fundamental aspect of His teaching we can hardly lay too much stress—it was positive, in contradistinction to the scribal system, which consisted very largely of prohibitions, of lists of things to be eschewed. This radical defect was inherent in the fact, previously noted, that the system placed religious and moral relations and duties upon a purely legal level; it followed that the moral ideal inculcated by scribes and Pharisees bore a predominantly negative complexion. A man was accounted righteous who had not transgressed this and that and the other regulation, who had abstained from forbidden kinds of food and refrained from forbidden kinds of acts on the Sabbath. Such a kind of righteousness is, when one gives one's mind to it, not unattainable; it can generate no moral enthusiasm, but on the other hand will give birth to the fatal self-complacency which enumerates its merits when standing before God: "I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get." But when the moral ideal is expressed in positive terms, "Thou shalt love," we get something infinitely stimulating just because entirely unattainable; for no one can say, "I have loved enough, as much as I am bidden," and thus hold himself absolved from loving any more. There can be no end to this obligation; nor will one who seeks to fulfil it wish that there should be an end, for no one loves against his will. That is why Jesus speaks of the righteousness which He enjoins as something that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees; it is a righteousness not of law but of love, and partakes of the infinitude of God Himself.

It is here that we perceive the explanation of the Lord's insistence on the ideal of forgiveness, as that which brings us nearest to God : the Law cannot forgive, must take its course, but God can and does forgive, because He is a Father, and His name is Love. True, the Divine pardon is conditioned by repentance and amendment, nor can we conceive that Jesus imposes the duty of pardoning upon His followers on any other terms ; for to forgive and reinstate the unrepentant, while a possible, and to generous natures often a tempting, course, is to put a premium on transgression. It was when the prodigal had arisen to return to his father, with sorrow and shame in his heart, that the father frankly and fully pardoned him ; then, and not before, even though he longed to do so all the time ; nevertheless, where there is true repentance, there, the Lord tells us, is the duty to forgive, not seven times but seventy times seven ; that is, without limit.

And so He rises to His sublimest paradox, the coping-stone of His whole edifice, which must bring this all too imperfect survey to a close—the command to love our enemies. We are to aim at that temper which is farthest removed from the censoriousness and vindictiveness of Pharisaism, the frame of mind and heart in which we can see the Divine imprint even on the brow of our injurer, still acknowledge his kinship with us (since he is still God's child), grieve over his fall from grace as manifested in the wrong he has done us, and desire his restoration rather than our paltry personal vengeance.

Such a disposition towers above the range of the ordinarily human as the Lord Christ Himself towers above our feeble stature. Nevertheless, we are to imitate Him, and thus to grow ; we are to put away more and more of our imperfection, and approach a little closer to the Divine perfection ; and if we will try to love, we shall discover that we have underestimated our powers of loving, which, like all other powers, expand with use. He that loveth is born of God, is like God ; and he who loves most will come closest—though closest is far off—to the fulfilment of Christ's ideal, realized in Him alone : " Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

PART II

CHAPTER XII

"WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?"

AT the beginning of our last chapter we spoke of the period of exile on which Jesus was now to enter, as shrouded in mist. Of the happenings of several months we shall receive only occasional, brief, dubious, and tantalizing glimpses, as the fog which envelops the wanderers seems to thin for a moment here and there; but between these glimpses there are long blanks, during which the whole field of vision is blotted out, and neither voices nor movements can be discerned. Moreover, there is an extraordinary amount of confusion in such fragmentary records as we possess, and in one important instance it will be seen that we shall have to reverse the order in which the Synoptists relate two episodes, so as to arrive at an intelligible narrative.

When Mark, on the heel of the Lord's declaration concerning clean and unclean, simply states that "from thence He arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (vii. 24), he is either already no longer aware that it was that uncompromising breach with the Law which caused this removal, or seeks to pass lightly over an unwelcome fact; yet nothing can be more certain than the causal connection between the two events. Jesus would not have gone out of Jewish into heathen territory, and that for a prolonged sojourn, without a compelling reason; the reason was that, by taking up a position of antagonism, not only to the Pharisaic elaborations of the Law, but to the Law itself, He had alienated what remained to Him of the support of the religious public—quite possibly to the extent of provoking hostile demonstrations. He was no longer safe even in Bethsaida, across the border; a further withdrawal became immediately necessary.

The significance of this intermediate phase was speedily and gladly forgotten; the more Christendom exalted its Lord, the less would the real nature of this retreat be understood. It is characteristic of the confused state of the tradition that while, as we saw, Mark, whom Matthew follows, relates *two* journeys into

gentile lands—separated by a return to Galilee, a second miraculous feeding, a visit to the western shore, the demand for a sign, and the return to Bethsaida—Luke makes no mention whatever of any journey outside Jewish territory ; even in telling the story of Peter's confession, our Third Evangelist does not say that it took place near Cæsarea Philippi. We have stated our reason for holding[1] that the supposed two journeys must be explained as historically *one*, a prolonged period of wanderings, now in the borders of Tyre and Sidon (Mark vii. 24–30 ; Matt. xv. 21–28), now in the district of the Decapolis (Mark vii. 31), now again in the far north, ranging to within a few miles of Philip's capital, Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 27–33 ; Matt. xvi. 13–23 ; *cf.* Luke ix. 18–22).

Where so much is vague and obscure, surmise will ever seek to step in, legitimately enough within certain limits, and so long as mere appositeness is not made to do duty for assurance. Thus we may say that this moment of grave decision seems to suit such incidents as those which we read in Luke ix. 57–62 ; Matt. viii. 19–22, where Jesus deals with various offers to follow Him. This may be the time when He reminded some enthusiast that to attach himself to His fortunes was to accept homelessness, and made those stern retorts to would-be followers who desired to discharge some other duties before throwing in their lot with Him ; the urgency of a situation which brooked no delay would explain such words as, " Leave the dead to bury their own dead." Again, we may feel, though we cannot prove, that parables like that of the man who before building his tower first sat down to estimate the cost—an illustration taken from the Lord's own trade—and that of the king who before going to war reflected whether he had sufficient troops to ensure victory (Luke xiv. 25–33), are likely to have been uttered at this turning-point : " So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." The purposely harsh and unsweet words seem to fit the occasion perfectly, as they do not fit the context in which Luke places them.

We shall ask ourselves next who it was that did follow Jesus into exile at this apparently disastrous turn in His undertaking. Many, we must assume, even among the ranks of His habitual entourage, withdrew, with whatever regret, from one who had openly defied the Law, insomuch that the Lord may well have said to the Twelve, " Would ye also go away ? " (John vi. 67). On

[1] See chap. ix., p. 141.

the other hand the "Twelve," whose names are so dubiously and variously preserved, probably did not form such a closed circle as appeared to a later age, and there were no doubt others as devoted, who followed the great Teacher and Prophet whom their nation had rejected, even into banishment; among their number would be that ardent, unnamed disciple who said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" (Luke ix. 57). Of course the total number of those who set out with Jesus from Galilee would be quite a modest one, and it is probable—as will become plain at a later stage—that not all of them were continuously with Him, but that there were occasional absences of this and that trusty adherent, despatched to obtain news of the situation, and bring it back. We may take it for granted that this knot of associates, leading a migratory existence during all that autumn and winter, would not include those women "who, when He was in Galilee, followed Him and ministered unto Him" (Mark xv. 41; *cf.* Luke viii. 2, 3); but while such participation in the fatigues and uncertainties of exile was plainly impossible, it is possible enough that Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Susanna, and other women-adherents continued from home to "minister of their substance" and at the same time to send news to the wanderers.

For wanderers and almost fugitives they certainly were, and the realization of that fact raises a number of questions: Why did Jesus effect this withdrawal at all—*i.e.*, how could flight form part of His plans? Was He, then, afraid of death? Undoubtedly it was all that is implied, or seems implied, in such a retreat, which caused it to drop out of the Church's recollections, as scarcely edifying, scarcely in harmony with its picture of the exalted Saviour. Islam celebrates the *hegira* of its prophet, dating its era from that event; Christendom tried to forget the corresponding occurrence in the career of Jesus. Its explanation, however, is not far to seek: *Jesus meant to die, but not in Galilee, nor at that moment.*

What was the position? He had, it is true, experienced a check in His hope to see at least a large minority of His countrymen converted before the advent of the Kingdom; He had, further, by His outspokenness put an end, for the time at least, to His own public activity; but in the meantime there had ripened in Him, as we have seen, the assurance of His own identity with the future Messiah, the Son of man who was to come with the clouds of heaven. But this very assurance implied the necessity of His death, which was on the one hand to let loose those birth-pangs which must precede the messianic age, and on the other to have

the redemptive quality which belonged to the sufferings of the Servant of Yahveh. Jesus, then, so far from fearing death, was quite determined to die, as only by that means could He return as the Messiah ; but in order that His death should produce at once the widest possible reverberation, it must not be brought about by a fanatical local brawl, but take place under conditions which would make it the signal for that general conflagration which He meant to kindle (Luke xii. 49)—*i.e.*, in the capital itself, and at a time when all Israel flocked thither, to wit, at the season of the Passover ; besides, it was a conviction of His that " it could not be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem " (Luke xiii. 33). God, of course, might intervene at any time between now and then ; but failing such supernatural intervention, Jesus was saving Himself up to die at His own time and at the place of His own choosing. For the present He retreated stragetically, in order to advance the more effectively at the right moment.

Tyre, whither Jesus and His band of followers turned their steps, was some fifteen hours' walk from Capernaum, to the north-west ; not all the manuscripts mention Sidon, which is a good deal more northerly still, only it was usual to speak of these two towns in the same breath. Any thought of teaching or missionary enterprise was far from Jesus' mind ; He still felt that He had not been sent but to His own people, and if they declined to receive Him, so much the worse. His object was to remain strictly unknown, but in the nature of things His ministry had spread His fame outside Galilee ; He had attracted hearers from this very region (Mark iii. 8), and if Mark is correct in stating that He had a house to go to, it shows that He was not without friends in these parts. Naturally, then, " He could not be hid," and when people heard that the great Healer was within their borders, they sought Him out in order to avail themselves of His gifts. Jesus, we may readily imagine, was little disposed for any such activity ; He was suffering from His recent experiences of rejection and defection, and His principal desire just then was to be left alone. Of course, this was not to be ; and we shall not be far wrong in assuming that for the one case which Mark, and Matthew after him, records, there were many others that are left unrecorded, where the Lord's compassion was won over by some specially persistent or specially afflicted sufferer.

The instance preserved by the Evangelists (Mark vii. 24–30 ; Matt. xv. 21–28) concerns the cure of a Syro-Phœnician woman's little daughter who is stated to have had an unclean spirit, no more

precise description being given of her ailment. When the mother is spoken of as a Greek, though a Syro-Phœnician by race, the meaning is probably that she used the Greek language, or belonged to a Hellenistic community. She approaches Jesus, casts herself at His feet, and beseeches Him to drive the devil out of her daughter. Now one would not have imagined but that He who had been so strongly moved by the entreaties of Jaïrus, who had so tenderly ministered to the little maid at Capernaum, who was so sensitive to the charm and the helplessness of childhood, would have immediately responded to this distressed mother's appeal; instead, we read that "He answered her not a word," and that, when at last He spoke, it was words which no ingenuity of interpretation can make otherwise than appalling in their want of common humanity, their narrow nationalist bigotry, their gratuitously insulting character: "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Instinctively we decline to believe that Jesus would have flung a term of abuse at a woman agonizing for her child. It is useless to plead that the meaning of His words was not to call the gentiles dogs, but that He is speaking figuratively, the stress being laid on the thought that those who have a legitimate claim are not to be supplanted by outsiders: what "legitimate" claimant to the Lord's healing gifts was being deprived of anything by His compliance with this poor gentile's petition? Neither can we suppose that the same mind which expressed itself so beautifully in the parable of the Good Samaritan—the true neighbour of the man who had fallen among robbers, even though he belonged to a hostile nation—would have refused for a single moment to succour a sick child because she was not an Israelite.

One could wish that it had been possible to accept an ingenious surmise offered by Dr. Adalbert Merx, who puts forward the following translation of Matthew xv. 26 in the Sinaitic Syriac as representing what Jesus actually said: "*Is it not meet to take away the bread which the children throw to the dogs?*"—whereupon the woman retorts, "Yea, sir, the dogs also eat of their masters' table, and live"—*i.e.*, they have a right to what is needful for life. Here the whole meaning has shifted: the disciples have probably urged the Lord to send the woman away, their contention being that such benefits as she implores are not for heathen dogs, but only for the children of the house of Israel; whereupon Jesus points out to them that it is these children themselves who in rejecting Him have thrown away the bread that was meant for them, and that it is surely meet to take and use what they have thrown to the

dogs. The woman, listening to a half-understood remark in an unfamiliar idiom, seizes on the word "dogs," and her bright, untutored intelligence prompts the observation, "Well, and after all, have not even dogs a claim upon their masters for sustenance?"—a shrewd example of mother-wit with which our Lord is not a little pleased, since He at once readily complies with her request. But this tempting theory is unfortunately open to fatal objection, as has been conclusively shown by Prof. Burkitt in his *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, vol. ii., p. 64 ff.; and we have to content ourselves as best we may with the surmise that the harsh words attributed to Jesus were spoken by one or other of the disciples. (*Cf.* Mark x. 13–16.) [1]

That this cure, like that of the centurion's servant (Matt. viii. 5–13, Luke vii. 1–10), is related as having been performed at a distance, does not add to the credibility of either story, and has probably an allegorical sub-intention, hinting at the mission to the gentiles, whom Jesus saved from afar, without visiting them personally; at the same time such an embellishment does not stamp the incident itself as unhistorical. As usual, we cannot say whether the cure was a permanent one, any more than we know the nature of the disease; as to the latter, it would appear from our scanty date that there had been violent convulsions which were succeeded by a state of exhaustion, which was duly interpreted as a sign that "the demon had gone out." The religious value of the episode does not consist in the performance of a miracle, but in the woman's prevailing faith, and the enunciation of the principle that in God's sight Jews and gentiles are counted alike—equally dependent, equally recipient.

Mark's description of the itinerary pursued by Jesus, "out of the borders of Tyre, through Sidon, unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis" (Mark vii. 31) is so extraordinary as to be barely credible. It may, of course, be urged that the Lord was wandering about without definite plans or aim, but it is more likely that Mark had no very clear idea of the respective position of the places he names. Jesus may, during that period of enforced inaction, have paid another visit

[1] To this context, *i.e.*, as a defence of His ministration to a gentile, we may refer certain words of the Lord's which seem out of place where Luke records them, viz., as spoken in the synagogue at Nazareth: "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah . . . when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." At the least these pointed references to cures wrought on Syrians, and not on Israelites, are singularly *à propos* in this connection, in which they may well have been uttered.

to the Decapolis, in spite of the discouraging reception with which He had met in that region on a previous occasion, when the natives had urged Him to leave their territory without delay; but we must repeat that there rests upon this whole period a veil of uncertainty which we shall not succeed in penetrating. The piety of the Church did not care to dwell upon this interval, during which her Lord roamed about from place to place, with less of a permanent shelter than birds or foxes; if the details were known, they were willingly forgotten.

We have no right whatever to fill up this vast empty space on our canvas by assigning to these months what is sometimes called "The Training of the Twelve"; still less, to devise elaborate sketches of what that training must have consisted in. This is what the late Bishop Boyd-Carpenter well and warningly described as "the mischief of supplemental imagination," adding that we must resist the temptation "to fill the Bible silences with imaginary material, and then to use this imaginary material as though it governed the interpretation of the existing narrative." We can say two things, and two things only, concerning this phase of suspended action: one, that it must have been, all its attendant hardships apart, an intensely trying one for our Lord; the other, that in the almost complete absence of external distractions He would probably be increasingly preoccupied with the doctrine of His own Person, and live increasingly in that *rôle* of the future Messiah to which His present homelessness and obscurity presented so striking a contrast. Unless God gave a signal for earlier action, He would wait until the approach of the Passover, appear in Jerusalem when the holy city was crowded with visitors, devise some means to "accomplish His decease" there (Luke ix. 31), and so set those supernatural events in motion which would lead to His return as God's Anointed, and to the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. That He could not spend so long a time in the closest company of His intimates without imparting many precepts, encouragements, consolations to them, may readily be assumed; but on the central subject of all He still preserved silence, until very shortly before His reappearance on Jewish soil.

Autumn had given place to winter, and winter brightened into spring, when the Master and His little flock found themselves in the extreme north of Palestine, at the foot of Mount Hermon, more than fifteen hundred feet above the level of the Lake of Galilee, near the springs of the River Jordan, and in the vicinity of Paneas, where Herod the Great, the builder of the Temple in

Jerusalem, had with remarkable impartiality erected a magnificent temple for the worship of Cæsar. Herod had a passion for building, and if a sanctuary in honour of Yahveh pleased his Jewish subjects, and another in honour of Cæsar pleased the court in Rome, the planning and execution of both projects pleased himself. His son Philip had rebuilt and renamed Paneas, and under the name of Cæsarea Philippi made it his capital. It is not stated, neither is it at all likely, that Jesus entered this gentile city, or even approached its immediate precincts; Mark viii. 27 tells us merely that He and His disciples came into the villages of the district, Matt. xvi. 13 speaks of the "parts" of Cæsarea Philippi, while Luke does not name the locality at all.

It was in this region, described by travellers as one of peculiar natural charm and romantic beauty, that, after the growing inner tension of the preceding months, the Lord reached a spiritual crisis which led Him to reveal His messianic secret to the three most intimate among the disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom He took apart on a hill-top. This revelation, as we shall see, forms the core of the narratives of what is known to us as the Transfiguration (Mark ix. 2–13; Matt. xvii. 1–13; Luke ix. 28–36). The Synoptists place this narrative *after* Peter's confession, which means simply that Mark does so; it will be, of course, incumbent on us to show in due course why we reverse that order.

We said that the Lord's self-revelation to the three disciples as the future Messiah constitutes the core of the Transfiguration narratives; but that core, the true character of what took place on that occasion, is hidden beneath thick layers of legendary and mythologic matter, and it is only by patiently applying the solvent of a cautious criticism that we shall arrive at what is, historically, a most important result.

We are told that as Jesus was praying with the three disciples He was transfigured before them, His face shining as the sun, and His garments becoming white and dazzling; that Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Him; that Peter, hardly conscious what he was saying, proposed to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus; that a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him"; and that, suddenly looking round about, the disciples saw no one save Jesus only. Now unless we are prepared to believe in such a marvellous transformation of face and raiment; in a celestial voice speaking in human language from a cloud; in the great men of antiquity reappearing and conversing with those of a later age; unless we

can accept this whole complex of miracles as fact, we shall have to try and explain what it is, other than fact, other than history. We shall have to ask such further questions as these: How did the disciples know that the ghostly visitants were Moses and Elijah? What did Peter mean by his proposal to erect three tabernacles? And, glancing at the narrative's sequel, Why did Jesus forbid the three to tell the vision until after His resurrection?

To begin with externals, the Synoptists' narratives are, as regards some of their prominent features, strongly reminiscent of what we read in Exodus concerning Moses on Mount Sinai. If Mark and Matthew tell us, for no very apparent reason, that the events which they relate took place "after six days"—a most unusually exact indication of time—we remember the statement in Exod. xxiv. 16, "And the glory of Yahveh abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud." In both cases a supernatural Voice spoke out of a supernatural cloud, after six days. If the face of Jesus shone like the sun, we find in Exod. xxxiv. 29 (R.V. marg.) that, when Moses descended from Sinai, his face sent forth beams by reason of his speaking with Yahveh—a reflection of the Divine glory. We recall also that Moses, like Jesus, on coming down from the mount of vision, had straightway to deal with an unbelieving people. All this, then, is but another instance of the familiar tendency of the Synoptists in relating the story of Jesus to reproduce Old Testament features, and especially Old Testament miracles; the Transfiguration, therefore, though the centre of the Gospel narrative, is not the essence of the incident as it happened, but later imitative embellishment.

The general idea of the Divine voice speaking out of a cloud, is no doubt, as we just saw, borrowed from the same Old Testament source as the Transfiguration itself; but there is, of course, a special significance in the Divine proclamation issuing from the cloud, and a further, albeit far less obvious, significance in the description of the cloud as "overshadowing." This will become plainer to us if we turn to the Sinaitic Syriac, remembering that it rests on a more archaic Greek original than any we possess; in this ancient version, then, Mark ix. 7 reads to the effect that the cloud overshadowed not *them* but *Him*, *i.e.*, Jesus. This is far from being a slight or unmeaning difference. We have only to recall Luke i. 35, where the angel, in announcing to Mary that she is miraculously to become the mother of the Messiah, is

represented as saying, " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High *shall overshadow thee* : wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy." Such overshadowing, then, is the poetic image for Divine generation. We recall in the next place that in the narratives of the Baptism we read of a voice from heaven saying, as the Spirit descends upon—(Greek, *into*)—Jesus, " Thou art My beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased," the same words as in the narratives of the Transfiguration—or, according to some versions of Luke iii. 22, " Thou art My beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee," which comes still nearer to the idea implied in the overshadowing cloud. And, lastly, we call to mind that this phrase, " Thou art My beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee," is a quotation from Ps. ii. 7, where the words are supposed to be addressed to a Hebrew king by Yahveh, in accordance with the notion that the king, in the act of ascending the throne, becomes the son of God by adoption.

What follows from all this is that this feature of the Transfiguration story presents a variant of the story of the Baptism, both being attempts to fix the time when Jesus was really made the Son of God, and declared as such from on high. It is easy to understand that the early Christians asked themselves when or how Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, was lifted to that dignity : some replied, " at the moment of baptism " ; others, " by miraculous birth " ; others, that He was the Son of the Highest from all eternity, and manifested Himself for a while in the guise of mortal flesh ; while yet another theory was to the effect that it was by the Resurrection, and not till then, that He was declared to be the Son of God. All these attempted explanations are found side by side in the New Testament, and the statement that the declaration of His Sonship was made on the occasion of the Transfiguration adds another to their number. Plainly, it belongs to the poetry of religion, not to history; neither are the cloud and the voice of the essence of the occurrence we are considering, but only a part of its legendary clothing.

Finally, in the apparition of Moses and Elijah, holding speech with Jesus ; in the proposal of Peter, characterized as due to confusion, to build three tabernacles ; in the disappearance of the two venerated personages of the past, Jesus alone being left—in all this, it may be said without hesitation, we are dealing with an allegorical fancy, freely created with a didactic intention. For Moses represented the Law, and Elijah the Prophets, and in after-days there was an attempt made by Judaistic Christianity

—an attempt with which Peter was strongly identified—to retain the law and the Prophets as of equal validity with the Gospel. This is the significance of Peter's futile suggestion of merely associating Jesus on equal terms with Moses and Elijah: behold, the Law and the Prophets, typified in their august spokesmen, disappear, and there remains "Jesus only," *i.e.*, the Gospel, in sole possession. The purport of this allegory would not be lost on early readers; nevertheless it, too—the appearance of the Lawgiver and Prophet of old—is not of the essence of the story, but a mere added, edifying decoration.

That essence, at which we at length arrive, after penetrating these various incrustations of myth, legend, and allegory, is the fact—a fact of the highest importance—that our Lord in that exalted hour let fall the veil of His long-guarded secret before His three nearest friends and associates, imparting to them His assurance that the destined Messiah, the Son of man who should come with the holy angels, was none other than Himself. We must bear in mind that both Jesus and His companions were in a state of high religious fervour, in an ecstasy, of the intensity of which we can form little conception; if at such a moment He told them, either for the first time, or more vividly than ever before, of His baptismal vision, of the descent of the Spirit, the voice from heaven, it might well seem to them in retrospect that they themselves had experienced what Jesus depicted so graphically for them. But if He revealed His Messiahship to the three disciples, it is more than likely that He initiated them at the same time into the mystery that He must die in order to return as the Son of man—die, too, on behalf of His brethren's sins, a voluntary, redemptive Victim. All this would be told, not in the calm accents of the lecture-room, but with prophetic fervour and vehemence, ecstatically, not logically: no wonder the disciples were bewildered, mystified, craving further information and explanation. Their Master was to be the Messiah—not Messiah's forerunner, as they had probably thought—but how could this be? Was it not understood that Elijah must first come? "Elijah *is* come," Jesus eagerly retorts—they had not been present when He had proclaimed this to the multitude after the departure of the Baptist's messengers[1]—"Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them." If men did not spare the herald, neither would they spare Him whose coming he heralded. It is the same thought which we find developed in the

[1] See chap. viii., pp. 134–135.

parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mark xii. 1–12 ; Matt. xxi. 33–46 ; Luke xx. 9–19), who, after maltreating and killing earlier messengers, killed last of all the son and heir of their master. " Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." The world had not known him : Jesus alone had pierced his disguise !

Very possibly the revelation had been too catastrophic, too overwhelming, for anything like a clear understanding to result. We have, indeed, every indication of the three disciples' perplexity and want of comprehension ; the idea that anyone should become the Messiah by suffering was too paradoxical to find ready entrance into their minds. In some inexplicable manner Jesus would presently be revealed as the Deliverer for whom His nation had waited so long—He said so, and they believed Him ; but why, for the purpose of such manifestation, He should have to die and rise from the dead, was a dark mystery ! Jesus could not but be aware of the disciples' inability to assimilate His thought ; it is more than possible that when the hour of exaltation was past He regretted having spoken at all. In any case He strictly commanded them to tell no one of their experience on the hill of vision—everything would grow clear to them when He returned in glory after death.

Within a few days that specific injunction was to be disobeyed, and the messianic secret to be divulged.

It was probably not altogether by accident that Jesus, shortly before the Passover, had repaired to those northern parts in which this last scene, and the one which was presently to follow, were enacted. There was an old tradition that the future Messiah would come from the north ; and having once identified Himself with that figure, Jesus was anxious, both in this and in other respects—notably, as we shall see, in the manner of His entry into Jerusalem—to fulfil these messianic predictions. This, we need scarcely say, was not done in order to make people believe He was the Messiah : on the contrary, because He *was* the Messiah, He would come from the north, would enter Jerusalem in a certain fashion, and so forth. He was now on the verge of that decisive step, the march upon the citadel of Judaism, which was to culminate in His death and triumphant return from heaven with the angelic legions ; it was inevitable that His mind should be full of these coming events, and He must have wondered whether the people had so much as an inkling of what was at hand. The masses in Galilee had heard Him preach the coming Kingdom with unique urgency and force of conviction : in what relation

did they—the remnant who might still believe in Him—conceive Him to stand to that Kingdom?

It is in this frame of mind that we may conceive the Lord asking one day, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark viii. 27–30; Matt. xvi. 13–20; Luke ix. 18–21). Such a question, asked in that non-Jewish locality, after so prolonged an absence from Galilee, leads us to infer that not all the disciples had been all the time in attendance on Jesus since He left Jewish soil; there would be a certain amount of going backward and forward, with the double object of gathering news and replenishing supplies, for a company even of from twenty to thirty souls could not move about in a strange land month after month without support from the home base. In asking what men thought of Him the Lord makes it plain that those whom He addresses are better informed than He, and such information could only have been obtained on recent—and presumably secret—visits to Galilee.

Had this inquiry been inspired—as it was not—by any hope of hearing that there was a school of opinion which looked upon Him as the coming Messiah, the disciples' reply would have set such an expectation at rest. Those whose faith had survived the *débâcle* which had led to His disappearance regarded Him as Elijah, *i.e.*, the forerunner of Messiah, some as John the Baptist, or as one of the old prophets come to life again.[1] Others, according to Matthew, identified Him more definitely with Jeremiah, concerning whom there was a legend (2 Macc. ii. 4–8) to the effect that he had hidden the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense in a cleft on mount Nebo, whence they would not be brought forth until the Lord should gather His people again together, and mercy come. But that He, Jesus, was Himself presently to prove the longed-for Deliverer had not entered into the popular imagination, nor was it at all likely that such a view should be entertained of Him. No one had ever thought of the Messiah as a rabbi or a healer of bodily ailments; still less had anyone contemplated the possibility of the restorer of Israel's independence taking up an attitude of antagonism towards Israel's palladium, the holy Law.

It is not to be supposed, therefore, that the disciples' report in the least disconcerted Jesus; neither His messianic mission nor its fulfilment depended on the popular acclaim—on the contrary, the prevailing popular ideas as to the Messiah's political and military activities were irreconcilable with His own conceptions. It is, accordingly, in our view an entire misreading of the

[1] These are exactly the suppositions alleged to have been current in Herod Antipas' entourage; *cf.* Mark viii. 28 with Mark vi. 14, 15, and Luke ix. 19 with *ib.* verses 7, 8.

situation to interpret the Lord's succeeding question, " But who say ye that I am ? " as an oblique invitation to declare Him the Messiah ; surely, if He had wished to be so acknowledged by them, He Himself would have made the requisite declaration. To imagine Jesus asking this kind of leading question—as it were playing for recognition—is to impute to Him behaviour worthy of a dubious pretender, not of the Son of God. Certain disciples, recently returned from a reconnaissance in Galilee, had replied to a query which only such a recent absence could have enabled them to answer ; still addressing them, and not the general body of His followers, Jesus—possibly hiding a smile at these fanciful guesses, and wondering whether they share them, or have any of their own—asks them what *they* think on the subject.

Of course, there were three men present who had learned the truth from the Lord's own mouth ; but they had not seemed to understand its full import very well, and, moreover, He had immediately placed a seal on their lips by pledging them not to divulge the secret till after His death. But now the unexpected happens : Peter, carried away by His feelings, breaks the pledge imposed upon him together with James and John, and bursts into the exclamation, " Thou art the Messiah," the Christ of God ! No more eloquent comment upon the theory that Jesus had wished to provoke such a declaration is needed than the sequel. Without a single word of commendation to the over-eager disciple, appalled by Peter's amazing indiscretion, Jesus abruptly, vehemently, commands the witnesses of the scene, now that the truth had been most inopportunely revealed, at least to let it go no further.

In every way this premature disclosure was regrettable from His point of view, and calculated to jeopardize His undertaking. For one thing, He was not yet the Messiah, but the Messiah-designate, who according to current Jewish thought was to remain hidden until the moment of his glorious manifestation ; it was part of the Divine plan that this chrysalis-stage should precede the marvellous unfolding. To point to the chrysalis and predict the many-hued grace it would change into was more likely to awaken scepticism and derision than faith. Moreover, the fundamental difference between His own and the commonly accepted view of the Messiahship made it most undesirable to let Him be identified with the victory-winning Son of David. Peter's failure to observe the pledge imposed upon him was likely to prove a source of serious embarrassment, placing Jesus in that very false position which He was anxious to

escape; no wonder at His marked want of enthusiasm or gratification.

It is true that Matthew xvi. 17–20 gives us an account of what the Lord said to Peter, which differs *toto cælo* from the effect produced by Mark's and Luke's account. The apostle is called blessed, as the recipient of a direct revelation from God Himself; he receives the name of Peter, as signifying the rock on which Jesus will build His Church, and there are committed to him the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, so that what he binds or looses shall be bound or loosed in heaven. Such an utterance, however, bears all the marks of being a later invention, inserted in the interests of the growing Catholic Church of the early second century.

(1) If Jesus had conferred the primacy in such unmistakable fashion on this disciple, there could have been no questioning among the Twelve on a later occasion as to which of them was the greatest, or should be the greatest, in the coming Kingdom (Mark ix. 34; Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24; *cf.* Matt. xviii. 1), or which of them should sit on the Lord's right and left (Mark x. 35–40; Matt. xx. 20–23). That such questions could be discussed, shows that not one of the disciples had as yet been singled out for prominence above the rest.

(2) As regards the bestowal of the name of Peter, it is interesting, though not, of course, conclusive, that according to John i. 42 Simon receives that appellation on the occasion of his first meeting with Jesus; it is fair to infer from such a direct contradiction that the real occasion of the bestowal of the name, as well as the reason for it, were soon forgotten, especially as the latter is not stated by Mark, who observes quite casually in enumerating the Twelve, "And Simon He surnamed Peter" (Mark iii. 15). When and wherefore soever given, it proved an unfortunate surname, for Simon, who denied his Lord at the approach of personal danger, certainly did not live up to its implication.

(3) It is to be noted that this (Matt. xvi. 18) and another passage in the same Gospel (xviii. 17) are the only ones in which the Lord is represented as speaking about "the Church." That He ever really did so, or that He contemplated founding such a society, is totally improbable, for what Jesus expected, and expected in the nearest future, was the Kingdom of God, a prospect which left no room in His mind for the establishment of a permanent institution. Not only so, but we know from the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles that the adherents of Jesus, and the apostles themselves, continued to frequent the Temple and to take part in its services, a fact which cannot be

reconciled with the supposed founding of a separate organization by the Lord Himself.

(4) But, above all, had Jesus really pronounced benedictions and bestowed high rank on Peter for declaring Him to be the Messiah, such a fact was not likely to be omitted by Mark, who derived so much of his information from Peter himself, and to be mentioned instead exclusively by a later writer, who had access to no such source of information.

We conclude therefore that the verses Matt. xvi. 17–19 are an unhistorical interpolation, made with a distinct motive; that the declaration of the Lord's Messiahship by the apostle, so far from being welcomed by Him, was inopportune; and that what is known as Peter's "confession" was the impulsive betrayal, however well intentioned, of what he had learned on the mount of Transfiguration. Jesus' immediate, unqualified prohibition to His followers to disclose their knowledge to anyone, speaks foritself.

And now it will be possible for us to justify our procedure in placing the episode of the Transfiguration before instead of after Peter's disclosure. By doing so, we recover a most valuable portion of the thread which within a generation from the events themselves had already been lost, and the loss of which accounts for the disjointed state of even our earliest Gospel, whose "order" we have ere this seen cause to describe more accurately as disorder.

Briefly, the sequence adopted by the Synoptists reduces the narrative to something like bathos. Supposing Peter's statement which proclaimed Jesus as Messiah had already been made in the hearing of all the rest of the disciples, what was the object of a second revelation of the same fact to the three alone? What, in that case, did they learn on that occasion but what they knew already, nay, what Peter himself had announced in the presence of all his colleagues? Such a second revelation would have come as a complete anti-climax. And what is it that Jesus would have charged the three not to mention to the rest? Not the supernatural shining of His face and raiment, nor the appearance of Moses and Elijah, nor the celestial voice, for these features do not belong to history; nor the announcement of His suffering, death, return, for these predictions—at which we shall presently glance—follow immediately upon Peter's confession, and He would thus be forbidding Peter, James, and John to make a disclosure which *ex hypothesi* He Himself had already made to the whole circle of His disciples. The only fact which He pledged them to keep to themselves was that which He had

communicated to them, and to them alone, viz., His identity with the coming Messiah. The story becomes intelligible when, and only when, we assume that this private initiation preceded instead of following the more or less public scene in which Peter figures so prominently. In that case we shall understand the source of Peter's knowledge, and our Lord's far from pleased attitude at his "confession": it was he, one of the privileged three, who at that moment divulged the messianic secret to the uninitiated majority, contrary to the explicit instructions of his Master. His impetuous act was to have far-reaching consequences at a later stage.

But now that the mischief was done, and since Jesus could not meet His disciple's indiscreet disclosure with a denial, He proceeded at once to check the misunderstandings which were only too likely to arise by explaining (Mark viii. 31–33; Matt. xvi. 21–23; Luke ix. 22) in what sense He was going to fulfil His messianic destiny. We have seen that in His own view He could become the Messiah only at His return; that a return involved in the first place a departure; and that that departure, as He conceived it, must take the form of such suffering and death as is described in Isaiah's picture of the Servant of Yahveh. Since the disciples knew so much, they had to be told more; that is why Peter's mistimed outburst was immediately followed by the Lord's solemn announcement of the fate in store for Him. With the reported form of that announcement we shall presently deal; but its essence was undoubtedly that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer death there, and quite shortly after return. "And He spake the saying openly" (Mark viii. 32).

The effect of such a statement may easily be imagined; it was indeed calculated to damp enthusiasm, inspire fears, produce amazement, among the very men who had but just been buoyed up by the highest hopes. Above all, His hearers were as little likely to grasp the idea of a suffering Messiah as Peter, James, and John had grasped His similar prediction when they were coming down from the mountain (Mark ix. 9). The clearest, most unambiguous pronouncement, if it cuts straight across the rooted ideas of those to whom it is addressed, will merely bewilder without convincing them. So what Jesus was now saying about the necessity of His dying proved depressing without being intelligible: who had ever heard of a suffering Messiah?

No one perceived the unhappy impression created by these gloomy predictions more quickly than Peter: still smarting

under the singular lack of appreciation with which Jesus had received his declaration, honestly grieved at the very thought of the Master's death, and once more with the best intentions, He took Jesus on one side, and began to upbraid Him: this was no way in which to talk to men who were all eagerness to be led to victory; they had had defections in plenty—were they to lose their few remaining stalwarts? But above all—and here we listen to Peter's genuine affection for the Lord—" God forbid that such a thing should happen to thee!"

This is too much for the greatly-tried Jesus: already, by his blundering impetuosity, Peter had placed Him in the greatest difficulty, and now he presumes—while the rest are listening, looking, wondering what is toward—to interfere when Jesus is trying to prevent the worst consequences of his garrulity! The emergency calls for drastic action; with harsh and withering rebuke the Lord turns on the luckless disciple: " Out of my way, adversary! thou art a stumblingblock, a snare; thou lookest at matters from the earthly-human standpoint, not from that of God's counsel!" Doubtless, this terrific rebuke, delivered with all the Lord's absolute ascendancy over His intimates, silenced all opposition; if He could not be comprehended, Jesus would at any rate be obeyed.

Still under the influence of the emotions through which He had just passed, Jesus now proceeded to strike the iron while it was yet hot, and to address to the disciples[1] that stern and stirring message which we read in Mark viii. 34–38; Matt. xvi. 24–27; Luke ix. 23–26: whosoever would come after Him, must deny himself, and be prepared to lose his life for the sake of the coming Kingdom and the coming Messiah. This is the deliverance of a leader to his troops before going into battle. The great prize is to be gained, can and shall be gained, but the enterprise will make severe calls on all who engage in it. It is for those, and for those only, who will not shirk hardships, sacrifices, the surrender of life itself, in order to attain to that truer life which is to be won by apparent loss. Those who mean to gain the Kingdom, must count the world well lost; and indeed, in the view of Jesus, this present world was so near passing away that it was foolishness to cling to its joys or possessions,[2] when such clinging to the perishable and perishing implied the losing of one's soul, one's true life. Nor is there room in

[1] Mark adds " the multitude," but this, in the circumstances, in foreign territory, is certainly a mistake, avoided by Matthew and Luke.

[2] *Cf.* the parable of the Rich Farmer, Luke xii. 16–21, with its sharply-pointed moral, " This night is thy soul required of thee."

such a host for half-hearted or apologetic soldiers; if anyone is "ashamed" of Jesus in this passing, faithless age, He also would be ashamed of them, decline to acknowledge them as His, when He came, as He soon would, in the glory of His Father.

It may be doubted whether either on this or on any other occasion Jesus used the figure of the cross in speaking to His disciples; it is more probable that this phrase reflects the consciousness of the early Church, which looked back to the crucifixion of the Lord, than that it represents His own words. In the Christian community the cross had become the current symbol of suffering, especially for righteousness' sake, but we can hardly think that Jesus used the same symbol prophetically, exhorting His followers to bear their cross, as He was presently to bear His.

This brings us to the question of the form in which the predictions of the Passion are found in the Gospels. It is noticeable, in the first place, that Mark, whom his fellow-Synoptists follow, relates no fewer than three such prophecies, no doubt with the distinct intention of producing a progressively heightened effect (Mark viii. 31; Matt. xvi. 21; Luke ix. 22. Mark ix. 31; Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Luke ix. 44. Mark x. 33, 34; Matt. xx. 18, 19; Luke xviii. 32, 33). Now it is indeed likely that Jesus recurred to this theme more than once; but as these utterances are reported, their very repetition produces an impression of deliberate arrangement rather than of spontaneity. There is, too, a tendency to circumstantiality which, in the first prediction, actually enumerates the groups composing the Sanhedrin, viz., the elders, chief priests, and scribes, while the third gives us in effect a brief summary in advance of all the principal features of the Passion: not only does Jesus foretell that He will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, but that He will be mocked and spat upon and scourged by the gentiles. These are surely later accretions, added at a time when it came to be felt that the omniscient Saviour must have foretold, because He foreknew, every item of His fate. The most probable shape in which He expressed these anticipations is also the most general, viz., that which we find in Mark ix. 31, "The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and when He is killed, after three days He shall rise again."

But did Jesus predict His resurrection? Unquestionably He did so; without, however, at the time carrying conviction to the

minds of the disciples, to whom the structure of His messianic belief, the necessity for His going away, remained obscure. Yet that structure had all the simplicity of a syllogism: the Son of man would come with the clouds of heaven; Jesus was that Son of man *in posse*: therefore Jesus must go hence in the first place, in order to reappear in glory in the second. The "how?" did not trouble Him; since this was God's plan, God would fulfil it, as He declared before the high priest unfalteringly. As for the prediction that He would rise again "after three days"—always in this form in Mark—this was plainly based on Hos. vi. 1, 2, "Come, and let us return unto Yahveh; for He hath torn, and He will heal us, He hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him." This is not an exact time-definition, but means "in a little while." Matthew and Luke duly substitute "on the third day" for Mark's "after three days," so as to make the prophecy correspond verbally with the discovery of the empty grave on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion. Jesus, we may be sure, simply anticipated His early reappearance, and in using a well-known scriptural phrase, and applying it to Himself, did not mean to indicate the precise day, for this kind of calculation was little to His taste (*cf.* Mark xiii. 32; Luke xvii. 20). Moreover, and this cannot be too clearly understood, the return to which He did look forward was not of the nature of a few appearances to a few disciples, but that manifestation in the glory of the Father with the holy angels, which was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God.

And now He was all urgency to set out on the execution of His purpose, all eagerness, after a final visit to Galilee, to reach Jerusalem, there to enter upon the last earthly phase of the struggle which must precede the consummation. It is possible that He had to use strong persuasion upon the laggards and the fearful—warnings against the profitless attempt to save one's life at the cost of losing that which is life indeed; encouragements to the hesitating, to stake all upon the prize set before them, even as the merchant sold all that he had, and bought the one pearl of great price (Matt. xiii. 45, 46); renewed and emphatic promises that the glorious goal, as He had always said, was near at hand. It is to this time of strain and stress that we may reasonably assign such words as these, flung up from the turmoil of His heroic soul: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and

what will I, if it is already kindled? I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 49, 50). He did not underestimate the agony which lay before Him, nor ignore the strife and division that were to ensue; but an invincible faith, an unshakable purpose, bore Him on. The Passover was approaching; the feast must find Him and His in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XIII

LAST DAYS IN GALILEE

THE resolve to be in the capital at the time of the forthcoming feast was doubtless fully formed in the Lord's mind when He and His companions had reached the region of Cæsarea Philippi; what is highly questionable is whether He would have revealed to them His purpose in going to Jerusalem—His intention to die there—but for Peter's betrayal of the messianic secret which he, together with James and John, had been expressly charged to guard during the Master's lifetime.

We must remember that the execution of Jesus' plan, as conceived by Him, did not depend upon either the approval, the co-operation, or even the knowledge of a single person: He had but to suffer death, and the rest—the glorious consummation—would follow. Had not Peter disobeyed His injunction to keep undivulged what he had learned in an hour of ecstasy, Jesus might have proceeded to Jerusalem without a word of warning to His followers as to what He meant to happen there. It was this wholly unexpected *contretemps* which opened His lips, first to impose the strictest silence upon them, and secondly to give them such a glimpse of the immediate future as He saw it, as would save them—and Him—from misinterpreting His Messiahship in the popular sense. It is not necessary for us to believe, as the Evangelists rather suggest, that the more plainly He foretold His death, the less were the disciples able to understand Him; at the same time it is likely enough that the associations which in their minds clung to the title and the office of the Messiah never yielded completely to His presentations of a wholly different circle of ideas, and that the joyous anticipations which Peter's indiscretion had aroused in them were but partially damped by their Master's riddling oracles about suffering and death. When He said such things, they might be "exceeding sorry" (Matt. xvii. 23), or "afraid to ask Him" (Mark ix. 32), or feel that "this saying was hid from them" (Luke xviii. 34), but their uneasiness would only be momentary: after all, He was the Messiah—that was undenied, and that was enough for

them ; they were only plain men, and there were things they did not understand, but, after all, they knew what the Messiah was, the Son of David, who was to restore Israel. It was these invincible hopes which furnished the disciples with the strongest incentive to accompany Jesus to the capital, in spite of the gloomy colours in which He had painted the immediate prospect : they must not miss their share in the glory which was assuredly about to dawn, the share that would fall to them as Messiah's closest friends !

From the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi to Jerusalem was a long and toilsome march of at least fifty hours by the nearest route, *i.e.*, by passing through the territory of Philip and the Decapolis, and continuing on the eastern side of Jordan ; Jesus and His followers might then have crossed the river before setting foot on the Peræan territory of Herod Antipas, and proceeded on their journey through Samaria and Judæa, which were under direct Roman rule, and where consequently they were in no danger of arrest by the tetrarch's emissaries. This was the road we should have expected Jesus to take, for His safest way of reaching Jerusalem without let or hindrance was to avoid, as He could have avoided, the domain of Herod Antipas altogether ; even in Jerusalem itself He was, if He wished to be so, safer from the meshes of the Law than in His native Galilee.

Nevertheless, the fact—brought out clearly only by Mark (ix. 30), slurred over and no longer understood by Matthew (xvii. 22), and altogether omitted by Luke (*cf.* ix. 43)—is that, before setting out for His destination, He returned to Galilee. In asking why the Lord should have taken a course for which we can discern little compelling necessity, while it involved a certain measure of risk, it may be frankly admitted that we stand before one of the unsettled problems of the Gospel story. We may at once dismiss all suggested solutions of a merely sentimental nature, such as a desire on the Lord's part to pay a last visit to the scenes where His ministry had been chiefly exercised, to cast a final glance over localities endeared to memory, to bid farewell to friends and acquaintances ; Jesus had too serious work on hand to indulge emotions of this order, and in crediting Him with such motives for so unexpected a step, " we do Him wrong, being so majestical." Again, it has been surmised that when the disciples had had it brought home to their minds that this expedition to the metropolis was, to say the least, not without a certain danger, they, or some of their number, insisted

on just so much respite as would allow them to put their earthly affairs in order, to dispose of such trifling property as they could call their own, and to take leave of their families. Even if Jesus was extremely reluctant to grant such opportunities, expressing Himself as strongly averse to the course proposed (*cf.* Luke ix. 57–62), He might after all have made this concession to His followers, especially as there was still ample time for covering the distance to Jerusalem.

In our opinion, however, a more convincing explanation is available. If, as we have seen, it may be assumed with reasonable certainty that Jesus, during His prolonged absence from Galilee, kept *en rapport*, with those of His adherents in Capernaum and elsewhere who still remained faithful to Him ; and if, in particular, we find that those women, " who, when He was in Galilee, followed Him," but who could not have shared His months of exile, were yet in the capital during the fatal Passover (Mark xv. 40, 41 ; Matt. xxvii. 55, 56 ; Luke xxiii. 49) ; we can come to no other conclusion than that they and others joined the travelling company during the Lord's last brief sojourn in Galilee. Indeed, it seems to us fairly probable that this visit to His native province served the purpose of quietly recruiting that caravan of the faithful which was presently to make its way southward, with Jesus " going before them "—in all likelihood a fairly numerous company.

That the duration of the visit was of the briefest is plain from the expression " they *passed* through Galilee " ; every publicity was avoided, for publicity spelt danger, and hence we read nothing of any teaching or healing activity. It looks as if the enemies of Jesus had done their work very thoroughly ; no multitudes gathered to meet Him as of yore, when He had merely crossed from the eastern shore—no crowds surged round the entrance to Peter's house in Capernaum. When in the fall of the preceding year He had gone into a foreign district, and " would have no man know " of His presence, " He could not be hid " ; this time His desire for secrecy, reported in almost identical words (Mark ix. 30), encountered no similar difficulty. Without having been technically excommunicated, He was one with whom it was not considered safe for good Jews to have any dealings. His cures were under suspicion of having been performed with the aid of Satan—possibly also there had been a certain proportion of relapses ; His confident prophecies of the Kingdom's imminence had remained unfulfilled, and His refusal to show a sign from heaven and flagrant defiance alike of Law

and Tradition had alienated the multitudes. By the phrase "He would not that any man should know it," viz., of His passing through Galilee, we need not, of course, understand a desire for a strict incognito, which in any case could not have been preserved; He was simply no longer a public character, but devoted Himself to rapidly gathering together that faithful remnant at whose head, after a few days at most, He continued His journey. For the disciples there was no longer that reflected glory in which they had been wont to move in the days of their Lord's popularity; as for Jesus Himself, He was too completely assured of the coming triumph to be greatly concerned about the fickleness of the populace.

Much as we might wish that it were possible, from this point onward and until the entry into Jerusalem, to trace the order of events with any approach to certainty, we have to confess, with whatever regret, that no such certainty is attainable. Often it is doubtful whether such and such an event or saying, now to be recorded by the Evangelists, really belongs to this phase, to this context; nor can we even always feel sure whether or to what extent this incident is historical, that utterance authentic.

Comparing our witnesses, we saw already in passing that Luke, who had not mentioned Cæsarea Philippi as the scene of Peter's outburst, is likewise silent concerning any visit to Galilee following that occurrence. If we had his Gospel alone, we should know nothing of the sojourn of Jesus in heathen territory, and still less be able to guess at the cause of that self-exile; when he speaks of the Lord's resolve to go to Jerusalem (ix. 51), we should be led to believe that Jesus and the disciples were in Galilee already, had in fact never left it, and were now going straight through Samaria. But leaving Luke out of the question, we cannot even say that either Mark ix. 30–50 or Matthew xvii. 22–xviii. 35 presents a trustworthy account of what really happened during that hurried stay in Capernaum. What each Evangelist gives us is a mere congeries of anecdotes and sayings, very loosely and in part quite artificially combined into a semblance of consecutiveness. Sometimes, indeed, there is no connecting link at all; sometimes a fragment actually breaks into another fragment, which is duly continued after the interruption. Sometimes again a saying is introduced in this connection by one Evangelist, which another gives in quite a different setting. What a study of these sections will bring out once more, and what we cannot too constantly remember, is that our writers

found their materials in such a disjointed state that it was for the most part quite impossible to allocate them in any but a haphazard manner.

An episode which certainly belongs to this period is that of the disciples' rivalry, which we find in all three Synoptics, viz. Mark ix. 33–37 ; Matt. xviii. 1–5 ; Luke ix. 46–48. Naturally, ever since the events near Cæsarea Philippi, the disciples had been greatly exercised to know how the promised developments were going to affect them personally ; and if hopes predominated, fears were not absent. If their Leader was really going to be killed, as He seemed so strangely to insist would be His fate, then their own position would be one of considerable danger ; and while a Thomas may have exclaimed with a kind of despairing loyalty, " Let us also go, that we may die with Him "[1] (John xi. 16), a Judas might already be plotting how to escape from such a predicament, should it arise. If, on the other hand, His assurance of being the future Messiah should be verified in the only way in which they could conceive of its verification, then it must needs follow that they, who had followed Him even into exile, would receive high preferment and offices of State in the coming Kingdom. Thus in their more sanguine moods they probably derived no little gratification from dwelling on the glorious future in store for them, and in all-too-human fashion fell a-quarrelling over their respective claims to priority.

Mark, in his vivid way, tells us that this subject had engaged their minds on the march from the north back to Galilee, and that when they arrived in (Peter's ?) house the Lord asked them what they had been arguing about, the narrative implying that He very well knew it had been on the question which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom. Matthew relates the matter rather differently, for according to him the disciples themselves went to Jesus and propounded their query to Him, while Luke's version approaches Mark's, with less definiteness. All three Synoptists agree in making Jesus rebuke the ambition of the disciples by pointing to a little child ; but beyond this central feature their stories present difficulties and differences which cannot but perplex the historical student, whose sole concern is to ascertain, so far as he can, what really took place.

Thus when Mark states that the Lord " sat down and called the Twelve " before making His pronouncement, that phrase lends to His action a deliberateness, as of pronouncing judgment,

[1] The words, where they are recorded in the Fourth Gospel, give all the impression of a genuine historical utterance misplaced.

which seems hardly to fit the occasion or to belong to history, and gives an air of overmuch solemnity to a simple incident. On the other hand, when Matthew represents Jesus as saying, after He had called a little child and set him in the midst of the company, " Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven," one asks oneself whether humility is really a characteristic of childhood, or whether this is not the Evangelist's own rather unfortunate attempt to explain the Lord's meaning. Very difficult also is it to accept as authentic the words attributed to Jesus (Mark ix. 37 ; *cf.* Luke ix. 48) : " Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me : and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." Such a remark has not only no bearing whatever on the question as to who is greatest in the Kingdom, but it reflects the consciousness, not of the Saviour, but of the early Christian community, which received little children " in His Name " ; it is introduced in the present connection—as is the saying about " causing one of these little ones to stumble," which follows in Mark and Matthew—simply because the subject of children has just been touched upon, exactly as Mark gives us one act of healing, one collision with the Pharisees, one parable, after another.

Nor can we pass by without inquiry the words, peculiar in this connection to Luke, " He that is least among you all, the same is greatest." Similar sayings appear in different contexts in Mark x. 43, 44 ; Matt. xxiii, 11 ; Luke xxii. 26, all pointing to an authentic original ; but only in this context is it introduced in this particular form by Luke. Who then can be " the least of the apostles," that is here referred to ? As soon as the question is asked, we remember that it was St. Paul who once styled himself by that very phrase (1 Cor. xv. 9),[1] and who yet claimed to be greater than any of them (*cf.* 2 Cor. xi. 23), even though they would hardly admit him as an apostle at all (1 Cor. ix. 2). It is difficult not to think that the actual words of Jesus have been introduced in this form and at this particular juncture with the very object of reminding the readers of the great apostle of the gentiles, and what a struggle he had had to wage for bare recognition and the right to exercise his office.

We have already said that the words of warning concerning those who should make one of these little ones to stumble (Mark ix. 42 ; Matt. xviii. 6 ; *cf.* Luke xvii. 2) are not likely to have been uttered on this quite unsuitable occasion, but that

[1] Luke ix. 48, μικρότερος ; 1 Cor. xv. 9, ἐλάχιστος.

Mark recorded them here for no other reason than that the mention of a little child seemed to provide an opening for other references to children. We may take it for certain that the qualifying clause, ["these little ones] *who believe on Me,*" is no part of the original utterance of the Lord Himself, but the later addition of the Church, and referred not to childhood in general but to the younger—or lowlier—members of the Christian community. That "little children" became the familiar appellation of Church members generally, at any rate in certain early Christian circles, we know from its use in the First Epistle of John. The Evangelists seem to play upon the double meaning of the term, its natural and its quasi-technical significance.

As the child set in the midst reminded Mark of what Jesus had said of those who caused one such to stumble, so the key-word "to stumble" reminds him of another deliverance about "occasions of stumbling" (Mark ix. 43–48; Matt. xviii. 8, 9; Luke xvii. 1, 2). The whole tenor of these sayings, which affirm that it is better to enter into life maimed or halt or one-eyed than having two hands or feet or eyes to go into eternal fire—the whole nature of the suggestion that a man should cut off the limb or pluck out the eye that causes him to stumble—leaves no doubt that Jesus was using striking figurative language, rather than giving advice which He meant to be followed literally. Sin, according to Jesus, comes "out of the heart"; He could not have regarded hands and feet—whatever might be said of the eyes—as organs specially liable to lead men into temptation; above all, He could not have imagined that so crude a method as self-mutilation would really effect a man's moral regeneration. But if thus the whole passage must be metaphorically and not literally understood, it follows that the same canon of interpretation must be applied to what is said about being cast into hell, the "unquenchable fire." The warning was no more against actual fire than the injunction was for men to cut off their actual hands and feet; what Jesus seeks to enforce by the use of vigorous picture-language is the principle that for the sake of the highest aims men must not shrink from the utmost sacrifices.

Wedged quite violently into the midst of the Lord's remarks about children, so as to break the thread in unmistakable fashion, there appears in Mark (ix. 38–41; *cf.* Luke ix. 49, 50, where the connection is not interrupted) an anecdote which is obviously out of place where it stands, an erratic splinter which has found chance lodgment without any regard for the fitness of things.

It was not during this hurried and semi-secret passage through Galilee *en route* for Jerusalem that John would have come to Jesus with a grievance against an exorcist who had presumed to cast out demons by the use of the Lord's name, although he was not a disciple, and whose unlicensed activities they, as the only authorized followers of the great Prophet, had therefore forbidden. The incident in itself is credible enough, as is Jesus' retort to His over-zealous apostle, " Forbid him not : for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us." The method of exorcism by the use of some name which the demons were supposed to fear was common ; we have an instance of such quasi-magical employment of the name of Jesus by itinerant Jewish exorcists in Acts xix. 13, and among the mass of magical formulæ of adjuration which have come down from antiquity we occasionally find the name of Jesus along with those of angelic beings, heathen divinities, etc. Such a practice was quite likely to spring up at the time when Jesus was in the zenith of His popularity ; it would naturally be resented by the disciples, who felt that this was a kind of poaching on their preserves, while Jesus, when approached by them with this angry complaint, probably told them not to make a mountain of a molehill : if by means of His name some sick person was restored to health, all the better—the user of that name was not likely to abuse its Bearer in a hurry, and that was so much gain.

But why should that incident be told in this connection—why should it, in Luke's Gospel, follow immediately upon the reference to that unnamed disciple who is the least among them all, yet great above the rest ? Why, in Marks' Gospel should this story of John's complaint against this " outsider's " exercise of an apostolic function be followed by the apparently quite unconnected and doubtfully authentic saying, " Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward " ? It looks very much as if these incidents and sayings, all placed together, were intended as so many indirect reflections upon the attitude of the original apostles towards St. Paul. When the early readers of Mark and Luke came upon the story of the man who carried on an independent ministry in the name of Jesus, and whom the apostles tried to stop on the plea, " He followeth not with us," they could not but be reminded of the analogy it presented to later events ; and if no one should lose his reward

who gave others so much as a cup of water to drink because they were Christ's, then what of St. Paul, who brought the contributions collected among his gentile converts to Jerusalem for the support of the Jewish Christians, as a sort of tribute? The incident of the exorcist is no doubt history, but it seems to be told with an ulterior motive, a secondary meaning, which would not be hidden from the Christian public of the early decades of the Church. Where it stands in Mark, it is so obviously an unskilful interruption of the text that there is much to be said for the view which regards it as a later addition to our earliest Gospel made by a Paulinist pen.

To sum up our conclusions regarding this section—Mark ix. 33–42 and its parallels in Matt. and Luke—what appears to have happened when Jesus reached Capernaum on His way from the north is that, on being asked by His disciples which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom, He replied, "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all"; and that then, turning with distaste from this selfish wrangle to a little child, trustful and unpretentious, He told His followers that unless they became similar to that little one in disposition, they should in no wise enter the Kingdom. Both observations are deserved rebukes, apposite to the occasion, and represent probably the whole of the Lord's reply; the rest, so far as it is authentic, belongs to other contexts, with here and there a *sous-entendu* which glances at the relations between the Twelve on the one hand and the Apostle Paul on the other.

Matthew assigns to this Galilean visit (xvii. 22–xviii. 35), in addition to the Lord's renewed prediction of His death, and the disciples' dispute among themselves, a good deal of material derived in part from "Q," in part from separate sources. Of course, it does not follow that any of this belongs to this particular period, while those features which have no parallels in the other Synoptics are, as we shall see, for the most part doubtful.

This description applies first of all to the wonder-tale, related by Matthew alone, of the coin alleged to have been found by Peter, in accordance with the Lord's prophecy, in the mouth of the first fish he caught (Matt. xvii. 24–27). The story reads unmistakably like a creation of fancy, especially since the theme of a treasure found in a fish is one of the most familiar in the repertory of legend. Nevertheless it is just conceivable that it is based on an actual incident, which we may conjecturally reconstitute as follows.

Jesus had returned to Capernaum, the scene of His former triumphs, to find Himself shunned by most of His erstwhile admirers and associates, forsaken by the crowds that used to hang upon His lips—in the general estimation a fallen star. But by one of those little ironies which light up even tragedy with their equivocal smile, there was one quarter in which He was not forgotten, viz., the ecclesiastical revenue department. In the weeks preceding the Passover every adult Hebrew was supposed to pay the temple-tax of two drachmas, or half a shekel. The local collectors, knowing of the irregular position Jesus occupied in regard to the Law, were in somewhat of a quandary, and approached Peter—who alone is mentioned in the tale, as if none of the other apostles were present—with the question whether it was any use to expect the statutory payment from his Master. The query, if historical, shows that Jesus was already regarded as outside the pale of Judaism ; when it is related to Him, He replies, with that touch of humour which He manifested on more than one occasion : " Properly speaking, of course, we are not liable to pay, you and I, for members of the royal household escape taxation ; but in order to cause no offence, go and ply your old craft as a fisherman, and I daresay the amount will be found ' in the mouth ' of your catch." That is not the promise of a miracle ; it means that the fish Peter was to catch would pay the tax, in the same way in which the cotter's pig or poultry is said to pay the rent.

Such an origin of Matthew's anecdote is not inherently impossible ; at the same time we dare not pronounce it more than barely possible, in view of its absence from Mark's Gospel, where —if anywhere—we might have expected to find such a reminiscence. It has also to be remembered that after the destruction of the Temple the Jews were compelled to continue paying the two drachmas annually to the Roman government as a kind of poll-tax, and that doubtless in the early days of the Church, when the Christians were still regarded as a Jewish sect, the same payment would be required from them. Under such circumstances a story might gain currency, telling how Jesus in His day paid the tax, although He was not really liable : let the Christians follow their Master's example, and pay rather than involve themselves in conflict with the authorities ! On the whole, then, we are inclined to think that the anecdote—of no particular moral or religious significance—is pure legend ; it is even possible, as we shall see in our next chapter, that Peter was not with Jesus at all during that last visit to Galilee.

The Lord's rebuke to the ambition of the Twelve by pointing to a little child suggests to Matthew, by association of ideas, the saying (xviii. 10), "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." These words are found in none of the other Gospels; whether they refer to children, or to the least and lowliest members of the Christian community, must remain questionable; perhaps in the mouth of Jesus the former was their meaning, while the Church applied them in the latter sense.[1] The words, "In heaven their angels, etc.," certainly do not refer exclusively to children, but express the popular belief of later Judaism according to which every human being had his own guardian angel; if the angels of "these little ones" form God's specially close attendants, who have exceptional opportunities of interceding on behalf of their charges, that would be an extension of the familiar post-exilic and New Testament idea which makes the poor, the meek and lowly, the despised of the earth, the favourite children of heaven.

In the beautiful words, "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14), we catch, no doubt, whensoever they were framed, the Master's own accents. Matthew, however, joins it on, by means of an "even so," to the parable of the Lost Sheep (xviii. 12, 13), which Luke relates (xv. 3–7) in conjunction with those of the Lost Coin and the Lost Son. Luke's moral, "Even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," is natural and comprehensible; on the other hand one does not see the connection, in Matthew's version, between the shepherd's care for the one strayed sheep and the case of "these little ones," unless they are thought of as weak members of the Christian flock, who may be easily tempted from the right road, but who, so far from being contemptuously left to their fate, are rather to be sought out and brought back. If this is the thought, it is that of the early Church, not that of Jesus, who was far too sure of the impending messianic era to frame rules for an earthly community of His followers.

It is impossible, for the same reason, to accept as authentic the following section, (Matt. xviii. 15–18), where the Lord is represented as prescribing the procedure to be followed in the case of disputes between members of the Christian community—first a private interview between the complainant and the one by whom

[1] We know that even in the primitive Church differences of rank and wealth made themselves felt; *cf.* James ii. 1–6, with its scathing indictment, "But ye have dishonoured the poor man."

he considers himself wronged; next a further interview in the presence of witnesses; if this should prove fruitless, a hearing of the case before the Church; and should either party refuse to bow to the Church's judgment, excommunication of the refractory member. To the Church, as such, is committed the power of binding and loosing—*i.e.*, permitting and forbidding—with the promise of ratification in heaven, which had been previously committed to Peter alone (Matt. xvi. 19). One has only to recall the preoccupation of Jesus with the fast-approaching end of the age in order to perceive that all these by-laws and statutes are the products of a later day; they belong, in fact, to the nascent Catholic Church, which did not hesitate many decades before investing itself with supernatural authority and something like infallibility, basing these pretensions on an alleged deliverance of her Lord. Jesus, as we said in dealing with Matt. xvi. 18, 19, could never have thought of establishing a permanent organization, because what He looked forward to was not the permanence of earthly conditions, but their immediately impending dissolution.

On different grounds one hesitates to attribute to Jesus the words which invest the united petition of any two of His disciples with a kind of compelling power over heaven (Matt. xviii. 19). Jesus took the highest possible view of the power of faith, and especially of faithful prayer; but there is something rather repellent in the notion that provided only that a demand is made by concerted action it is sure to be granted. The difference between His authentic point of view and the one here put forward is that between spiritual and mechanical irresistibleness. In the following verse, again, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (xviii. 20), we hear the consciousness of the Christian community rather than the actual voice of Jesus Himself, solemn and beautiful as the words are; the utterance is on the same level as the concluding words of this Gospel, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—*i.e.*, it is a spiritual interpretation of the fact of Christ rather than an authentic saying of the historic Jesus. This is what the second and third generation of Christians felt about the exalted Saviour, a precious legacy to every succeeding generation, but hardly what Jesus would have said concerning Himself in the days of His flesh.

We see again with how little regard for inherent probability the contents of this section are put together, when we next find Peter approaching the Lord with the question, "How often

shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" (xviii. 21). It is fairly obvious that this was not the time for such disquisitions; the visit to Galilee, described by Mark as a mere passing through, did not lend itself to these didactic conversations, nor would Jesus be in the mood for them. The juncture called for swift action, and above all for the mobilization of the expedition to Jerusalem, in which no doubt all available adherents, both men and women, were to take part, so that the capital might be entered with a certain impressiveness. Peter's query merely introduces a variant of the Lord's saying on the duty of forgiveness—not until seven times, but until seven times seventy, *i.e.*, *ad infinitum*—which Luke chronicles in a different setting (Luke xvii. 3, 4), and with the wise qualification that forgiveness on the one side is conditioned by repentance on the other. Doubtless this saying is as genuine as the directions for litigants in Matt. xviii. 15–18 are the reverse. This principle of unlimited forgiveness breathes quite a different spirit from the legalism which bids the injured party, if other attempts to obtain redress have failed, to bring the matter before the tribunal of the Church, whose decision, in case of recalcitrancy, is reinforced by the power of excommunication. We may be sure that He who exhorted the contentious and quarrelsome to agree with his adversary quickly, while he was yet in the way with him (Matt. v. 25), would never have given instructions for one believer to hale another before a Church court; we may be sure that He who thought it better to suffer injustice than to appeal to the arm of the law, would not have laid down a rule that under certain circumstances the offender was to be to his victim as a heathen man and a publican—a harsh and uncharitable phrase, which seems a direct negation of the spirit of Him who freely consorted with the publicans instead of holding them up to ostracism. No doubt, then, the principle, "Forgive where there is repentance—forgive as often as there is repentance," is the true coinage of His mind; but its enunciation hardly fits this occasion.

Having, however, just introduced the topic of forgiveness, the Evangelist is reminded of a parable about a king who "forgave"—*i.e.*, remitted—the enormous debt which one of his servants owed him; how that servant, instead of practising the like generosity towards one of his own colleagues, who was his debtor for quite a trifling amount, treated him with the most shameful savagery, and had him cast in prison; and how the matter came to the ears of the king, who forthwith had the unmerciful servant "delivered to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was

due "—the lesson being that God would deal in the same manner with those who were unforgiving toward their brethren (Matt. xviii. 23–35).[1] That this parable is without parallel in the other Synoptics, proves nothing against its authenticity; but, in the form in which Matthew reports it, it strikes us as less true to life than the Lord's similitudes usually are. As we read of the king who cancels an enormous debt of ten thousand talents—some two and a half million sterling; of the servant who acts like an infuriated barbarian over a trumpery sum of a hundred denarii—some four pounds—actually taking his wretched debtor by the throat; of the decree that the unmerciful servant is to be tortured till he has made full restitution, we feel that while the design may be by the Divine Artist who painted so many imperishable frescoes with the mingled vigour and intimacy of genius, the execution seems by some inferior hand, done with a coarser brush and in more glaring colours.

There is thus no escaping the conclusion that the one incident which we can with reasonable certainty assign to the occasion of our Lord's final visit to His native province is the discussion among the disciples as to which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom; all the rest the Evangelists report is a conglomerate of anecdotes and sayings standing in little relation to the situation or to each other—material for which they deemed this a convenient niche, and which serves to fill the gap in their knowledge as to what took place at this point. This gap would be explained if it should appear that Peter was not among those who accompanied Jesus to Galilee, and had therefore no first-hand recollections to hand on to Mark.

What really happened during that flying visit must be left to surmise; we believe that it served little other object than a meeting, probably arranged in advance, between Jesus and those of His friends who had remained in Galilee, and who were now going to accompany Him to the capital. That they learned something of that messianic secret which had already become the property of His companions in exile is possible; perhaps it was inevitable that they should do so, at any rate prior to their arrival before the gates of Jerusalem.

As for Jesus, we know that He was set upon one thing only—to carry out that fixed purpose of His, and so, first of all, to reach

[1] *Cf.* Jesus ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) xxviii. 2–4: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done thee; and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest. Man cherisheth anger against man; and doth he seek healing from the Lord? Upon a man like himself he hath no mercy; and doth he make supplication for his own sins?"

Jerusalem on the eve of the great festival, when the city would be thronged with pious pilgrims from the whole known world. This was the mass of inflammable material which He meant to kindle to such a conflagration as history had never witnessed, a conflagration in which He too would perish, only to rise again, like the fabled bird, from its ashes. The whole world was to be consumed and to be born anew, for the eternal reign of God should be begun at last, when the Son of man—He who had here been known as Jesus of Nazareth—would come with the clouds of heaven as God's Anointed.

Let, then, the preparations be made with all convenient speed ; let the farewells be shortened, and such private affairs as claimed to be attended to be despatched without delay, for the sands were running out. The time was fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God was at hand. " And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem " (Luke ix. 51). No words could better express the concentrated resolve of the Lord, which saw and sought its goal, hailing it from afar.

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

WITH His forces hurriedly gathered together during that stay in Galilee which was hardly a stay—perhaps they had been advised of His coming beforehand, and were waiting in readiness to join Him—Jesus broke up without further delay, intent upon His destination. The Passover was the one season of the year when the metropolis of Judaism was crowded to suffocation with pilgrims from every portion of the ancient world, and while we need not accept the fantastic figures of Josephus, who calculates the number of visitors and residents in Jerusalem at one particular festival at 2,700,000, there can be no doubt that an immense concourse was drawn every year to the Holy City. It was a season of intense religious excitement, which might easily turn to turbulent frenzy; if Jesus meant to cast fire upon the earth (Luke xii. 49), here was all the material for a conflagration. The Roman authorities were well aware of the dangerous possibilities of the situation, and the Governor deemed it best to be in Jerusalem at a time when breaches of the peace might easily happen, requiring a strong hand to quell them. Perhaps it was on some occasion such as this that Pilate had mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices (Luke xiii. 1).

For Jesus to show Himself in the capital was in itself an act of challenge, for it was remembered that only the year before a deputation of inquiry, sent from Jerusalem, had visited Galilee in order to deal with and report upon His agitation; and, though His long absence in exile had allowed time for the episode to pass into partial oblivion, His reappearance would in itself suffice to rouse the official guardians of Jewish orthodoxy to renewed and hostile watchfulness. On the other hand it must not be forgotten that among the countless caravans that were making their way into the city one such company of pilgrims might quite easily escape notice, unless notice were deliberately sought. The disciples doubtless believed that, when matters reached the critical stage, their Master would call "legions of angels" (Matt. xxvi. 53) to His and their assistance, and by this means overcome His enemies and establish the Kingdom of God; nevertheless, these hopes

must many a time have alternated with fears as they realized that the die was now cast, and the hour of decision was drawing inexorably near. Of course, all would be well—especially since the alternative did not bear contemplation.

But, in the first place, there was the question of the route to be settled. According to Josephus (*Antt.* xx. 118), pilgrims from Galilee usually travelled to Jerusalem through Samaria; but this statement is difficult to credit in view of the embittered racial and religious feud between the Jews and the Samaritans, and Galileans as a rule probably found it safer as well as pleasanter to pass through the country east of Jordan (Peræa), even though this involved crossing and recrossing the river. Jesus, however, had strong motives for avoiding Peræa, which formed part of Herod's dominions, and accordingly decided to use the alternative route, through Samaria (Luke ix. 52). Somewhere about this period He seems to have received a definite intimation that Herod meant to deal with Him as he had dealt with the Baptist, and that it were best for Him to be gone (Luke xiii. 31–33). Now, though the Lord was resolved to die, He intended the scene of His death to be, not some remote fortress, but Jerusalem; if, then, He would escape the tetrarch's plottings, it followed that—to use the Fourth Evangelist's language (John iv. 4)—"He must needs pass through Samaria." Thither, accordingly, we may presume to a village just across the border, He sent messengers—the context implies that they were James and John—to provide quarters for Himself and His company (Luke ix. 51–56). The people at the *khan*, however, refused to receive pilgrims going to Jerusalem, not from any objection to Jesus personally, but because they preferred to have no dealing with Jews. Greatly incensed, James and John reported the affront to their Master; whether the "sons of thunder" (Mark iii. 17) really suggested calling fire down from heaven to consume the obdurate Samaritans, or whether they merely vented their annoyance by saying that that was how these ungracious boors ought to be treated, we need not seek to decide. Jesus, in any case, rebuked their vindictiveness; after all, this was not the only place in Samaria where He and His might find a night's shelter, and, disappointed in one village, He simply went to another.

At this point our accounts seem to diverge hopelessly. Mark x. 1 tells us that "He arose from thence"—*i.e.*, from Galilee—"and cometh into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan." Similarly Matt. xix. 1 states that, "when Jesus had finished

these words, He departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan." These statements are taken to mean that, finding the Samaritan route closed, the Lord after all travelled through Peræa; on the other hand, Luke tells us definitely that He travelled through Samaria (xvii. 11), and divides the Lord's ministry into three parts, a Galilean, a Samaritan, and a Judæan. Now if we look first of all at Mark's formula, "into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan," a glance at the map suffices to show that this cannot be accurate; for the words would suggest that the Lord came *first* to the place of His destination, Judæa, and *then*, for no discoverable reason, went across the river into that eastern territory, Peræa, which He had every motive to avoid. The true reading of the text, however, which is also that of Matt. xix. 1, declares that Jesus came "into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan," omitting the "and"; but such an expression could only be used by someone who was himself on the eastern side of Jordan—just as, *e.g.*, only someone east of the Meuse could speak of Mezières as on the other side of that river. Now it has been surmised that what happened was this: the party which set out from Cæsarea Philippi divided into two sections, one of which, possibly under Peter's leadership, took the route east of Jordan, while the other, consisting of Jesus, James, and John, and others, went first of all into Galilee, and then journeyed through Samaria, thus reaching Judæa without crossing the Jordan any more; the two sections would meet again at some prearranged point, before arriving, as a united body, at Jericho. Now if Peter had travelled south on one side of the river, while Jesus did so on the other, we should be able to understand Peter relating that Jesus came into the borders of Judæa *beyond* Jordan —and Peter is, of course, Mark's principal source. This, too, would explain Mark's silence about the Lord's passage through Samaria; Peter had told him nothing about it, for Peter had not been with Jesus. Still further probability is lent to this theory by the fact that Luke speaks of James and John as being with Jesus, but not of Peter, who is usually mentioned along with the other two chief disciples. If this hypothesis is true, then we have not to choose between two irreconcilable versions, but can say that Jesus did take the Samaritan route, as Luke states, and that Mark's tale is resumed when the Lord, after traversing Samaria, comes into Judæan territory (Mark x. 1). The two accounts, therefore, instead of being mutually exclusive, would supplement each other, without violence being done to either of them—a happy solution of what has always constituted a difficulty.

We must, it is true, distinguish between the Samaritan *journey* of the Lord, which Luke records, and the Samaritan *ministry*, which he alone attributes to Jesus, and the description of which fills chapter after chapter of his narrative (ix. 51–xviii. 30).[1] The former is not without its difficulties, for it is not easily apparent why an individual or a caravan travelling from Galilee to Jerusalem should abandon the direct route for a long detour, and pass through Jericho (Mark x. 46 ; Matt. xx. 29 ; Luke xviii. 35) ; but a prolonged sojourn in Samaria, such as Luke's narrative necessitates, is contrary to all likelihood. It is not likely that, after hurriedly " passing through " Galilee, and " steadfastly setting His face to go to Jerusalem," Jesus would have pursued this leisurely, lingering course, when His mind must have been full of the impending crisis ; it is above all unlikely that He would have conducted such a ministry as Luke describes, in a country whose inhabitants, so far from being Jews, were in bitter enmity to the Jewish race. When we come to analyse the contents of these chapters—a full third of Luke's Gospel—it becomes plain that the so-called " Samaritan ministry " is only a literary device of the Evangelist's, enabling him to find room for a mass of material he could not fit in elsewhere. Part of this material belongs to the document " Q," and is found in Matthew, in different contexts ; but a great part is derived from a separate source of Luke's, with a very distinct character of its own, a very individual point of view, and presenting Jesus in an aspect marked by peculiar tenderness and sympathy with the poor, the oppressed, the social and even the moral outcast.

To enumerate even in briefest fashion what we owe to Luke's use of this source, is to feel how deep is our indebtedness to the separate tradition which he alone has preserved for us. We have only to think of such gems as the stories of the Good Samaritan (x. 30–37), the Importunate Friend (xi. 5–13), the Dupe of Wealth (xii. 16–21), the Unfinished Tower and the Prudent King (xiv. 28–32), the Lost Piece of Silver (xv. 8–10) and the Prodigal Son (*ib.* 11–32), the Rich Man and Lazarus (xvi. 19–31), the Importunate Widow (xviii. 1–8), the Pharisee and the Publican (xviii. 9–14), to recall such traits as the Lord's refusal to be a judge and a divider of property (xii. 13–15), or such an idyll as His stay at the house of Martha and Mary (x. 38–42), together with other incidents and teachings to be found in this Gospel only, to realize how greatly Luke has enriched our knowledge of Jesus. At the same time the value of Luke's specific contribution—a value

[1] Luke ix. 51–xviii. 14 is without a single Marcan parallel;

which cannot be over-estimated, for that contribution not merely fills in the outlines but colours our whole picture of the Saviour—is quite independent of the question whether these episodes and sayings form part of a Samaritan interlude in the Gospel story.

As a matter of fact, as soon as we begin to go into details, we find that Samaria cannot have been the scene where this or that event related by the Evangelist can have taken place. To state it bluntly, this " Samaritan " section presupposes almost throughout a Galilean background, and its incidents belong to the Galilean ministry, not to a period of unhurried wandering through a region, the well-known hostility of whose inhabitants would in itself counsel despatch rather than delay, even had there been time for the latter. Luke, it is true, tries from time to time to keep up his literary convention, representing Jesus as going " on His way, through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on to Jerusalem " (Luke xiii. 22) ; after several chapters the Lord and His followers are still " going up to Jerusalem " (xviii. 31), and a little later He pronounces the parable of the Pounds " because He was nigh to Jerusalem " (xix. 11) ; but how careless the Evangelist is of even moderate verisimilitude becomes apparent when he actually says, " And it came to pass that as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee " (xvii. 11). This is as if a journey from Northumberland to London should lead the traveller through Yorkshire and Northumberland—a statement which would indicate either complete ignorance of geography or complete indifference to it.

Luke's case is really one of indifference ; for he does not scruple constantly to introduce in this section—*i.e.*, on what is supposed to be Samaritan soil—the familiar figures of the scribes and Pharisees, whose presence in that environment is unthinkable. Twice over Jesus is represented as taking a meal in the house of a Pharisee—in Samaria (xi. 37 ; xiv. 1) ; " a certain lawyer stood up and tempted Him "—in Samaria (x.–25) ; it is in Samaria that He taxes the scribes and Pharisees (xi. 42–52) in the very language of the great indictment we read in Matt. xxiii. ; it is in Samaria, where He would be quite safe from Herod, that the Pharisees warn Him, saying, " Get thee out, and go hence : for Herod would fain kill thee " (xiii. 31–35). Not one of these incidents could have taken place in a non-Jewish part of Palestine ; and when, in addition to all the rest, Luke goes so far as to suggest that Jesus, while actually on the way to Jerusalem, " appointed seventy and two others, and sent them two by two

before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself was about to come" (Luke x. 1), it is plain that the Evangelist himself does not think it worth while to adhere to the pretext of a Samaritan *local*.[1]

We conclude, therefore, without hesitation, that there was no Samaritan ministry; that although the material utilized by Luke in these chapters is of the highest value and interest, the items composing it—which, it may be said in passing, include singularly few miracles—are related and inserted without any regard to historical sequence; that Jesus in all likelihood made His way to Jerusalem by rapid stages on the western side of Jordan, *i.e.*, traversing Samaria, while probably another section of His followers made the journey on the eastern, Peræan side of the river, the two parties meeting by arrangement "in the borders of Judæa, beyond"—*i.e.*, west of—"Jordan," a little to the north of Jericho. It is at this point that Mark, who has been silent about Samaria, once more takes up the thread of his narrative.

But if the incidents and teachings which Luke inserts between the Lord's departure from Galilee and His arrival in Judæa cannot be assigned to that period, it is not possible to speak with complete assurance regarding those events and deliverances with which Mark—whose arrangement Matthew closely follows, adding only one parable, that of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1–16)—bridges the same interval. Indeed, as we read the opening statement in this section of Mark's Gospel, "And He arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judæa [and] beyond Jordan and multitudes came together unto Him *again*, and, *as was His wont*, He taught them again" (x. 1), this very insistence upon the resumption of an activity which had come to an abrupt end many months before merely serves to raise the question whether Jesus, on His way to Jerusalem, really reopened the public ministry which had closed with His self-exile. In our view of His purpose, such a resumption was not what He had in contemplation at that juncture; He was going to the capital, with little time to spare, solely intent on ushering in the Kingdom, which would follow His death. Moreover, in spite of this explicit statement about the multitudes gathering round Jesus *again*, and about His teaching them *again*, *as He was wont*, it is to be noted that the subsequent narrative presents us with no instance of Jesus addressing the crowds. Instead, we have a number of detached episodes, all of which might just as well have happened

[1] On the mission of the seventy-two, see chap viii., p. 129.

in Galilee, and only two of which (Mark x. 13–16, 35–45) are readily conceivable as incidents of travel.

Thus, when we read (Mark x. 2–12 ; Matt. xix. 3–9) that once the Lord found Himself on Judæan soil, " there came unto Him Pharisees, tempting Him," and propounding a query as to the lawfulness of divorce, we feel that such an encounter does not fit the occasion of a journey, though it reminds us of the closing stages of the Galilean ministry (*cf.* Mark vii. 1–13, viii. 11–13). The question was whether in the matter of divorce Jesus accepted the ruling, not merely of the tradition of the elders, but of the Law, which plainly sanctioned the practice. It is suggested that both the query and the answer had in view the case of Herod Antipas and Herodias : John the Baptist had been put to death on account of his scathing protests against the tetrarch's marriage to his brother's divorced wife ; Jesus was regarded as the Baptist's successor—let Him be asked whether He took up the same position. Such a conjecture is, however, far too speculative, especially as John's execution was probably due to political motives rather than to his condemnation of his sovereign's marriage.

We may take it that the Pharisees, in framing this particular problem, had hit upon a very congenial stratagem. Jesus had repudiated some portions of the Law, apparently on the ground that the regulations in question made life too burdensome ; let Him now be tested in regard to a matter where the Law was distinctly accommodating to human weakness, viz., the dissolution of the marriage-bond. If He agreed that it was " lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause " (so Matt. xix. 3), His acknowledgment of the Law's authority where it made concessions would contrast very unfavourably with His repudiation of the same authority where it imposed restrictions; if, on the other hand, He denounced the customary facilities for divorce, another count would be added to His indictment as a despiser of the sacred code.

In countering their question with another, " What did Moses command you ? " the Lord, while signifying at once that He means to abide by the finding of that authority, meets stratagem with stratagem ; for He means them to quote Deut. xxiv. 1, which prescribed that if a man had found some unseemly thing in his wife, he should be at liberty to give her a document dissolving the marriage—and this His opponents duly do. Now the Mosaic statute had been interpreted by some of the rabbis with a good deal of freedom, multiplying the grounds which entitled a husband to a divorce ; hence the question, " Is it lawful for a man to put

away his wife *for every cause*?" But Jesus, in invoking the authority of the Law, took much higher ground than His questioners expected, and pointed to two venerable passages (Gen. i. 27, ii. 24), which according to Jewish views were just as much "Law" as the Mosaic legislation. Since God Himself had created man and woman, and destined them for each other, He had thereby invested marriage with a sacred character; a union of such unique intimacy, Jesus argues, was in the Divine intention meant to be indissoluble, and its severance must in any case be contrary to that original intention. So much for the ideal aspect of the marriage relation, which, of course, was to be taken as the governing one; the directions later given by Moses had regard simply to the frailty of human nature—man's hardness of heart—they were in the nature of a dispensation, legal, not moral, valid as law, but to be deplored as being temporarily necessary at all.

Jesus, then, discountenances all divorce, with that absolutism which so frequently characterizes His utterances. Such uncompromising sternness was doubtless prompted by a prevailing laxity to which the ingenuity of the doctors of the Law ministered, as may be gathered from the fact that Rabbi Hillel and his disciples held a man to be lawfully entitled to put away his wife if he were dissatisfied with her skill as a cook! Marriage, He declared categorically, was a Divine institution, which man had no right to annul. How quickly the Christian Church was compelled to recognize the necessity of admitting qualifying circumstances which made the dissolution of this bond lawful we may see from Matthew's version of this episode (xix. 9; *cf.* v. 32), where the admission of such circumstances—viz., adultery on the wife's part—is attributed, no doubt by an afterthought, to the Lord Himself. Jesus was not a lawgiver but a prophet; a prophet's business is to lay down general principles of morality, that of the lawgiver to make provision for individual cases.

Of the nature of afterthoughts, too, appear to be the subsequent discussions of this question between the Lord and the disciples. We know that these alleged private conversations which discuss public utterances of the Lord's are a familiar device of the Evangelists for introducing secondary matter, and so it seems to be in this case. The statement, peculiar to Mark, which prohibits a wife from putting away her husband and re-marrying (Mark x. 12), is certainly unauthentic, for such a step was not open to a Jewess to take at all, though her Greek or Roman sister might do so. Nor shall we unquestioningly accept the tradition followed

by Matthew (xix. 10–12), according to which the disciples were so startled by the absoluteness with which their Master had expressed Himself on this subject that they declared that, if so rigorous a view were to prevail, it was better not to marry at all. This improbable comment, which recalls 1 Cor. vii. 8, is merely intended to lead up to a pronouncement, expressly stated not to be for the comprehension of all and sundry, to the effect that as there are those who are by temperament destined for a single life, and others who have been disabled from exercising the marriage function, so there are also those who of their own accord forgo married life " for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake." Such a commendation of religious celibacy as an ideal for those " to whom it is given " (*cf.* 1 Cor. vii. 7, " Howbeit, each man hath his own gift from God ") would strike us as of doubtful genuineness in the mouth of Jesus, wherever found ; its exclusive occurrence in this ecclesiastical, catholicizing Gospel inclines the balance of credibility heavily against it.[1]

We conclude that the story of the Pharisees' question concerning divorce, and the Lord's answer, is undoubtedly historic, but that it belongs in all likelihood to the Galilean period, or possibly to the last week in Jerusalem, where there may have been many attempts to entangle Jesus in His speech ; but as an incident of travel—from which, by the way, nothing follows, for the Pharisees simply disappear after they have been answered—it does not carry conviction.

Nor can we declare ourselves altogether satisfied that the recollections which now follow belong to the days of the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. In the preceding section we had a story of the disciples' discussion on the way from Cæsarea Philippi to Capernaum as to who should be the greatest among them, coupled with an episode the point of which is the exaltation of a little child (Mark ix. 33–37 ; Matt. xviii. 1–5 ; Luke ix. 46–48) ; it cannot but strike us that in the present section we should again have such a story of ambition (Mark x. 35–40 ; Matt. xx. 20–23), following shortly upon another incident culminating in the declaration that in order to enter into the Kingdom of God it is necessary to receive it as a little child (Mark x. 13–16 ; Matt. xix. 13–15 ; Luke xviii. 15–17). That there should have been two such disputes, both of them occurring on journeys, need not

[1] Far more likely to be authentic are the words which we read in Matt. xix. 4 in the Old Syriac version, " Have ye not read that He who created the male, created the female also ? "

have offered any occasion for surprise ; but when we find both the claim to primacy among the disciples and the commendation of the qualities exemplified by little children, in two successive sections, the question naturally arises whether it can be the case that these occurrences circulated in two alternative versions, and that Mark, becoming acquainted with both, thought they referred to different events, and so recorded them in different places. We remember that this was the view we took of the *two* miraculous feedings and the *two* departures into heathen territory (*v.s.*, chap. ix. p. 141) ; it is possible that the *two* disputes about precedence, and the *two* stories in which Jesus exalts childhood may, like the *two* missions of the disciples, in each case represent *one* actual event which was afterwards variously related.

Without stressing this hypothesis unduly, we turn to the immortal wayside scene (Mark x. 13–16 ; Matt. xix. 13–15 ; Luke xviii. 15–17), which is specially dear to the heart of Christendom, because it shows us Jesus as the Friend of children and the Defender of the defenceless. Whether the little incident took place in Galilee or in the borders of Judæa, is immaterial ; of its historical truth there can happily be no doubt. As the great Prophet of Nazareth was making His progress, some simple village mothers brought their little ones to Him, that He might touch and bless them. The disciples, either from sheer officiousness or from pedantry, tried to keep the children away from their Master : it was surely presumptuous to trouble the Messiah-designate with such trivial requests, which did not even involve the working of a cure. " But Jesus, when He saw it, was moved with indignation " —we owe this particular to Mark—" and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me ; forbid them not : for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And He took them in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands upon them."

On this story, as a story, so endeared to Christian and indeed to human sentiment, there are few comments to offer ; it shows the Lord in the most winning light, Himself responding to the charm of childhood, His sympathy spending itself upon the village boys and girls whom the interfering disciples would have kept from Him as beneath His attention. If it is the case that this episode and the one which records Him setting a child in the midst of the disciples at Capernaum are different versions of one and the same occurrence—and the word ἐναγκαλισάμενος in both lends support to that possibility— we have no difficulty in concluding that the version

which tells us of the caress and the blessing bestowed on the children whom the disciples would have forbidden access to Him is the original one. In both instances the disciples are rebuked; but the one story is as natural as nature itself, while in the other the child is somewhat too deliberately "brought in."

To determine the exact meaning of the words, "Of such is the Kingdom of God," may be impossible; they appeal, and rightly appeal, to the feelings rather than to the intellect. If the text represents the exact words of Jesus, He does not speak of the Kingdom as the portion of the children, but says that it belongs to those whose nature is childlike. By that quality of childhood which our Lord felt to be an indispensable qualification for entering the Kingdom He can hardly have meant the innocence of infancy, with its pathetic appeal, for such innocence is really ignorance, which cannot survive contact with life. Neither, as we saw when dealing with the companion episode to this one, can the reference be to the supposed humility of childhood, which is not at all an attribute characteristic of the natural child. We are on surer ground if we assume that what struck Jesus was the receptiveness and trustfulness of children, their frank belief in and acceptance of all good things, not as due to any desert on their part, but as the good gift of a world or an order of things which means well. The Pharisees were ever intent upon accumulating, by strictest fulfilment of the Law and the traditions of the elders, a weight of merits which should *earn* them—give them a claim to—heaven's rewards; whereas the temper which Jesus sought to inculcate in His followers was that expressed in the words, "Fear not, little flock; it is the good pleasure of your Father to *give* you the Kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). It is in the latter, not the former spirit, Jesus holds, that the Kingdom can alone be entered.

There follows in all three Synoptics the story of what is known as the Great Refusal, the Lord's warning words concerning the dangers inherent in great possessions, Peter's query as to the reward of those who had left all and followed Jesus, and the reply given to him by his Master (Mark x. 17–31; Matt. xix. 16–30; Luke xviii. 18–30).

When we speak of the story of the Rich Young Ruler, we show how intimately the accounts given in the different Gospels have been interwoven in our minds; for Mark tells us only that the individual in question was *rich*, Matthew alone says that he was *young*, and only Luke states that he was a *ruler*—probably a warden of some synagogue, like Jaïrus; on the other hand,

Matthew knows nothing about this rich young man being a ruler, nor Luke about the rich ruler being young. Mark alone wishes us to understand that the incident followed directly on the blessing of the children, for the phrase with which he introduces it, " And as He was going forth into the way," is to remind us that Jesus was in a house (Mark x. 10), which He was now leaving in order to continue His journey. But we know the Evangelist's way of linking up his material by just such devices as this, and the story which follows fits far better into the period of the Lord's immense popularity in Galilee than into that which saw Him officially discredited and forsaken by all but the stoutest of His former supporters.

It was during that earlier phase, when the excitement caused by the announcement of the Kingdom's near approach was at fever-point, that we can best imagine the action of this well-to-do man who, in a state of painful agitation, prostrated himself before the famous rabbi with the question, " Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? " Why Jesus should have taken exception to this mode of address, is not quite evident, and most of the attempted explanations bear the stamp of artificiality. What is quite sure is that the Lord declined the appellation, on the ground that " none is good save One, even God." God alone was pure, unqualified Goodness ; that was the first lesson His questioner needed to learn, and not to use as a compliment to One who was found in fashion as a man a title which none but the Heavenly Father might claim. How distasteful this utterance proved to the Church, we can see by Matthew's laboured and unsuccessful alteration of the rich man's question into, " Master, what good thing shall I do?" and of the answer into " Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good."

Having corrected the seeker after eternal life on this preliminary point, Jesus shows once more how implicitly He shared the belief of His nation that the commandments were intended as the way of life, by retorting, " Thou knowest the commandments " ; and His enumeration of the weightier matters of the Law plainly suggests the implied conclusion, " This do, and thou shalt live " (*cf.* Luke x. 28). What, however, is most significant is that His enumeration is almost exclusively confined to the second half of the Ten Commandments, those which deal with man's duties towards his fellows, and which the orthodoxy of the day declared to be of less importance than the duties towards God—abstention from idolatry, from abuse of the Divine Name and from breaches

of the Sabbath. These latter Jesus does not so much as mention: let this anxious inquirer put himself into right relations with his neighbour, respect his life, his honour, his property, his good name, nor offend against the natural piety due from children to their parents, and he need not fear for his eternal welfare.

It would seem as if the young man had expected something far less prosaic than a mere recital of these familiar demands with which he considered himself, rightly or wrongly, to have complied from his youth upwards; was there not something else, something more, that he might do in order to make assurance doubly sure? There was an eagerness, an impetuosity about his attitude which made a highly favourable impression upon Jesus, drawn, as ever, by sympathy towards such men of violence, who meant to take the Kingdom by storm. Here was, to all appearance, splendid material for a disciple, a member of the inner circle; only, in order to belong to that circle, it would be necessary for him to do as its other members had done, *i.e.*, give up his worldly possessions, and so acquire "treasure in heaven." Alas, the request proved too great; this man might have been willing to make considerable sacrifices, but to part with all he had was beyond him, and he departed with saddened mien, leaving a saddened Jesus behind.

This demand of the Lord's, as we saw in an earlier chapter,[1] is only to be understood from His eschatological standpoint; with the present age about to come to its end, property was little more than an impediment better got rid of. Addressed to this man of wealth, it was meant to test the earnestness with which he shared this belief in the nearness of the Kingdom, and, as it turned out, his enthusiasm did not survive so severe a trial. Regretfully he turns back, and is lost to view.

It may be worth noting that according to the Gospel of the Hebrews this incident took place in the house of a rich man, to whom, when he declares that he has observed the Law and the Prophets, Jesus replies as follows: "How sayest thou, I have fulfilled the Law and the Prophets? Seeing it is written in the Law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: and many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in uncleanness, and languish in hunger, and thy house is full of good things, yet nothing doth ever go out from it unto them." This looks like a reminiscence of the story of the rich man at whose gate Lazarus was laid, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table (Luke xvi. 19–31); but it would be too hazardous to suggest that it was the Lord's unfortunate experience with this well-to-do young

[1] Chap. xi., p. 180.

man which led him to tell the story of the beggar who at death was carried into Abraham's bosom, and the rich man who exchanged his sumptuous mode of life on earth for the flames of Hades.

It was natural for Jesus, who for a moment thought He had discovered a kindred spirit, to be keenly disappointed, and it is this disappointment which finds expression in the exclamation, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." What is quite incredible is that a pronouncement so entirely in harmony with other declarations of the Lord on the same subject should have stricken the disciples with amazement—as though they had not heard Him say, "Blessed are ye poor; but woe unto you that are rich" (Luke vi. 20, 24) or lay it down that "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke xvi. 13).[1] Nor is it likely that the disciples should have been led by a statement which applied solely to the small minority of the rich to ask the quite general question, "Then who can be saved?" or that Jesus should have answered, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God." Jesus would never have said that a rich man could be saved, unless he had first renounced his riches; such a doctrine of salvation by the miracle of grace without works is Pauline, and the question which leads up to its enunciation does not arise from the Lord's previous remark.

But if it was this rich man's clinging to his wealth which had prevented him from following Jesus, and if his turning back after all his show of earnestness had moved the Lord to utter His warning words concerning the dangers of great possessions, the scene which they had just witnessed suggested to the disciples an obvious line of thought, of which Peter once more made himself the mouthpiece: *they* at any rate had left their own, their all, and followed Him! Spoken or merely implied, the question was there—What reward should they have in the Kingdom of God? That question was no doubt frequently in the disciples' mind; the answer ascribed to Jesus is given at greatest length in Matthew, a little shortened in Mark, still more abbreviated in Luke. It is Matthew alone who records in this connection the promise, which appears in a different context in Luke (xxii. 30), and which represents probably the whole of the

[1] It may, however, well be the case—the suggestion is Professor Burkitt's—that the disciples, remembering their indebtedness to wealthy supporters who "ministered unto them of their substance" (Luke viii. 3), asked some such question as this, "What—will no rich be on the good side at the end?"

historic reply made by Jesus: "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." We are far less assured of the genuineness of that part of the recorded answer which promises to every one who had left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for Jesus' sake, "manifold more in this time"—*i.e.*, in the present age—and in the world to come eternal life. It is quite true that the Christian, in the eager companionship of the early communities of believers, found himself a member of an enlarged family, in which there were many more brothers and sisters, parents and children, than he might have given up in adopting his new faith, and that he was often compensated for the loss of his personal belongings by sharing in the possessions of his fellow-Christians; but Jesus did not look forward to any such developments—such indefinite extensions of the present age—at all, and therefore had no occasion to prophesy this kind of terrestrial compensation, seeing that He expected the whole existing order of things to terminate in the nearest future. We cannot but think, therefore, that these predictions express the consciousness of the early Church rather than the mind of Jesus.

It is doubtful whether the saying which closes this story in Mark and Matthew—"But many that are first shall be last; and the last first"—though authentic in itself, was uttered on an occasion such as this; it seems rather to have been introduced for the purpose of covertly contrasting the Twelve, who had come first, with St. Paul, who had come last, and who had yet laboured more abundantly for the Gospel than all the rest, thus winning a higher place in the Kingdom.

Matthew links up with this saying the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, to all of whom, even to those who had been hired in the eleventh hour, the lord of the vineyard instructed his steward to give a full day's wage. The parable, which is a striking protest against the calculating Pharisaic doctrine of merits and rewards exactly proportioned to the fulfilment of legal requirements, bears the impress of Jesus, who saw in God not a celestial paymaster, but the Father who seeth in secret, and considers the inner motive rather than the outward act; but the connection with the aphorism about the first being last, and the last first, is an artificial one, seeing that all the labourers were equally remunerated, the notion of "first" and "last" being thus expressly done away.

The Lord had promised to the Twelve—and we must remember that this promise embraced Judas—that in the regeneration, *i.e.*, in the Kingdom, when He Himself was seated on his throne, they also should sit on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel. But there was still a distinction to be achieved, a precedence to be gained, in the allotment of these thrones: naturally, those who occupied the seats nearest to the King would have the chief influence in the Kingdom—it was worth while trying to make sure of these favoured positions. With this object in view James and John now sought a private interview with Jesus (Mark x. 35–40; Matt. xx. 20–23), trying in the first instance, according to Mark, to obtain His consent in advance to any request they might prefer. (Matthew attempts to shift the odium from the two apostles on to their mother, but in the very next verse drops that very transparent artifice.) Once more we must distinguish between a more and a less historical element in the Lord's reply. The former consists in His refusal to grant what He declared to be not in His but in His Father's power to dispose of; and possibly that is all He did say. But tradition represents Him as replying to the ambitious sons of Zebedee that they did not know what they were asking—that what would happen to them would be to share a similar fate to His own, viz., martyrdom; they would drink of the same cup, be baptized with the same baptism, as He Himself—so much He knew—but as for sitting on His right hand or His left, that was for those for whom it had been prepared by His Father.

The question naturally arises whether Jesus actually uttered such a definite, explicit prediction, which James and John, moreover, perfectly understand in spite of its being couched in figurative language, while they are supposed not to have understood the far plainer statements concerning the Lord's own fate. May not perhaps the prediction of their martyrdom have been founded on events that had taken place before the composition of the Gospels? As a matter of fact, James had been put to death by order of Herod Agrippa A.D. 44, as we learn from Acts xii. 2; but there is also a statement attributed to Papias, who wrote in the earlier half of the second century, from which we learn that John likewise died a martyr's death, and probably at not too great a distance of time from that of his brother. "Papias says in his second book," we are told by a seventh-century or eighth-century witness, reposing probably on a fifth-century document, "that John the Divine and his brother James were slain by the Jews." If James and John were both dead when

Mark wrote—if they had been martyred nearly a generation previously—there was ample time for the growth of a legend that on the very occasion when they made their request for pre-eminence in the Kingdom Jesus had foretold their death.

That the audacious and at the same time rather underhanded manœuvre of the sons of Zebedee caused murmurings among the other disciples, is easily understood; incidentally, the fact that these two should have dared to ask such a favour is the best proof that no primacy had been conferred upon Peter. Jesus allayed the natural soreness felt by the rest of the apostles by directing their attention away from the two offenders, and to the true principle of eminence in the Kingdom of God as distinguished from the kingdoms of this world: in the latter the ideal was to exercise lordship and authority over the subject masses, but in God's Realm greatness is achieved by service: "whosoever would become great among you, shall be your servant: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be bond-servant of all." According to Luke (xxii. 24–26) the occasion of this utterance was the dispute among the Twelve which of them should be accounted to be greatest, an additional indication that this may really be the same story as that of James' and John's request. It is an interesting, though, of course, by no means a conclusive circumstance that several important manuscripts insert in this place in Matthew's Gospel that parable on the subject of humility which we read in Luke xiv. 8–11, and which warns men against eagerly taking the chief seat at a banquet, lest their reward should be humiliation, but exhorts them rather to sit down in the lowest place, so that the giver of the feast may have occasion to bid them to go up higher. If not actually spoken in this connection, the parable is at any rate apposite as a comment on the vaulting ambition of the too-presuming disciples.

But in addition to laying down the principle of greatness to be achieved by service, we read also that the Lord pointed to His own office and example, in words which in Mark x. 45 and Matt. xx. 28 run as follows: "For verily" (or, "even as") "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Such a pronouncement would be perfectly intelligible to the communities for which Mark wrote his Gospel, and whose members were familiar with the Pauline circle of ideas, with their insistence upon Christ's voluntary self-humiliation, and upon His death as the unique means of redemption and justification; but whether we can see in it an authentic deliverance of the historic Jesus, must be gravely

doubtful, if only because the idea of ransom is never found elsewhere in the Lord's teaching, while it is very plainly related to the thought of St. Paul, who is the true author of the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. Moreover, this statement does not read as if it referred, prospectively, to a death yet to be consummated, but rather, retrospectively, to an event which had already come to pass—it speaks, not of a Son of man who should come, but who had come to give His life as a ransom. And, still further, when we turn to the parallel passage in Luke xxii. 27, we find there that Jesus, in offering His own example of lowliness, does not speak of His death and its redemptive purpose, but says, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." This, no doubt, is the historical original form of the utterance, whereas that which we find in Mark and Matthew has the air of a marginal comment made by a pious Paulinist. That Jesus, in assuaging the ill-feeling among His disciples, and in order to shame the spirit of selfish rivalry, should have spoken of His own function as essentially that of service, we can well believe ; that He should on such an occasion, and in a merely incidental manner, have made just one reference to a momentous doctrine which remains otherwise unmentioned in His teaching, is hard to credit.

And now the caravan was nearing Jericho, the city of palm-trees and balsam-groves, set in a fertile oasis in the stony Judæan desert, seventeen miles from Jerusalem, a last halting-stage before they reached their destination.

Among those who had gathered in the streets to see the processions of pilgrims which were ceaselessly passing through on their way to the Feast was the chief customs official of the place, one Zacchæus (Luke xix. 1–10), or Zakkai, an abbreviation of Zechariah—a rich man and no doubt, like all his order, unpopular in proportion to his wealth. Small of stature, and anxious to see a Teacher of whom it was said that He was a friend of his own despised class, Zacchæus climbed a sycamore tree, *i.e.*, "the Egyptian fig, of which the low branches are very easy to climb." Eagerness always appealed to the Lord's own temperament ; He probably inquired who this man was, had his name and occupation given to Him, and, hailing him, entered into conversation, finally asking his hospitality. It was an unusual honour for a tax-gatherer to entertain a rabbi, even a heterodox rabbi, and we can understand the haste with which Zacchæus descended and led his Guest to his house, amid the disgusted murmurs of the respectable. What happened while he

entertained Jesus must be left to surmise, but tradition states that some moral change was wrought in the official, and that he declared, before bidding farewell to Jesus, his intention of giving half his goods to the poor, and making fourfold restoration of anything he had wrongfully exacted of any man. It may be noted that Jesus declared Zacchæus saved, even though he did not promise to sell all he had and give it to the poor, and though He Himself, in His disappointment, had once declared the impossibility of a rich man entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is not the only occasion where the practice of the Master furnishes a moderating comment upon the intentionally heightened character of His precepts.

We shall not linger over the story of the blind beggar (Mark x. 46–52 ; Matt. xx. 29–34 ; Luke xviii. 35–43) whom Mark calls Bartimæus, while Matthew, indulging once more his strange idiosyncrasy for duplication, speaks of two blind beggars, and whose sight Jesus restored at the gate of Jericho. The narrative is noteworthy for its many vivid touches—the man's persistency in raising his clamour in spite of the rebukes of the bystanders ; Jesus standing still and giving orders to have the patient brought to Him ; the beggar's eager gesture, as he leaps to his feet, casts away his cloak, and makes his way to the Lord ; the rapidity with which his request is granted, Jesus once more using the old formula, " Thy faith hath made thee whole." One is rather inclined to surmise that if the man was able to " spring up and come to Jesus " apparently without assistance, and if Jesus had to ask what it was that he desired to have done to him, this patient suffered from some malady of the eyes rather than from blindness. That by this time Jesus was occasionally hailed as the Son of David by voices in the crowd, as is here stated, is not impossible, though we note that the beggar, who is supposed to have used that messianic appellation before Jesus called him to draw near, afterwards addressed Him simply as " Rabboni." The statement that the man, as soon as He had received his sight from the Lord, " followed Him in the way," is probably symbolical in purpose.

The oasis is left behind, and the train proceeds along the steep Jericho road, through a dismal and arid tract—that notoriously robber-infested road, which Jesus made the scene of His parable of the Good Samaritan that proved neighbour to the Jew who had fallen a victim of one of these gangs, and befriended him when his own countrymen passed by on the other side. One cannot help wondering if the desolateness of the country served to

sober the extravagant hopes of the disciples somewhat—if they began to realize, as they neared the capital, that not an easy and spectacular triumph, but a stern life-and-death conflict lay before them. One would think so, from the picture which Mark in a few indelible strokes draws of that progress—Jesus, deep in thought, taking mighty strides ahead of the others, tense, resolute, silent, preoccupied; while, as for His intimates, "they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid."

The fateful decision was drawing very close; and across the mind of the most confident member of that party there may have drifted undefined visions of tragic possibilities.

CHAPTER XV

THE ASSAULT ON THE CITADEL

THERE was abundant cause for that silent, self-absorbed manner of the Lord's on the journey to Jerusalem, which so perplexed and even terrified His followers. Whatever their expectations might be, He was on His way to meet—indeed, to seek—His death. During the concluding phase of His period of exile from Jewish soil Jesus had matured His plan of campaign, though His lieutenants, when initiated, had failed to understand it. That hurried last visit to Galilee saw the mobilization of His forces, the signal given to His adherents to follow Him. The journey to the capital, which was to be reached before the Passover, was in the nature of a march upon the enemy's citadel; the next step was to be an attempt to carry that citadel by storm, to take—or inaugurate—the Kingdom by force.

Now although the accounts of the events of Passion Week cover, roughly speaking, one third of the whole of Mark's and Matthew's and one fourth of Luke's Gospels respectively—although, *i.e.*, we have so much fuller details concerning that brief period than concerning all that had gone before—the exact chronology even of these last days is by no means easy to establish. Our principal difficulty is due to the fact that there is direct and irreconcilable contradiction as to the date of the crucifixion itself between the Synoptics on the one hand and the Fourth Gospel on the other; and, contrary to what we generally find to be the case where such divergences manifest themselves, the balance of probability inclines to the side of the Fourth Evangelist. Briefly, the question is whether the Friday on which the Lord was crucified was the first day of the Passover feast, or the day before, the 15th of Nisan or the 14th; and the uncertainty as to this supreme date involves all the events of the days preceding it in a corresponding uncertainty. That the day on which Jesus was put to death was a Friday, is not in question; on this point Mark xv. 42; Matt. xxvii. 62, xxviii. 1; Luke xxiii. 54; John xix. 31 are decisive. Now according to Mark xiv. 12, 17, whom the other Synoptists (Matt. xxvi. 17, 20; Luke xxii. 7, 14) follow, the Last Supper which Jesus took with His disciples was the Passover meal, which was held on the 14th of Nisan; the same night He was arrested and tried by the Sanhedrin, and on the morrow after—*i.e.*, on the

first day of the Passover—He was despatched to Pilate to be sentenced, and the sentence executed forthwith.

The Fourth Evangelist sets himself, quite pointedly and no doubt deliberately, to correct this account. In his narrative the Last Supper is held "before the feast of the Passover" (John xiii. 1); that is to say, according to this source it is not the Passover meal, and to make this quite plain he tells us that Judas' departure from the table was thought by the other apostles to be due to instructions from Jesus that he should purchase what was needed *for the feast* (*ib.* 29), meaning the ritual meal, which therefore could not be identical with the one in progress. The next morning the emissaries of Caiaphas who take Jesus to the Governor's residence do not enter the building, "that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover" (John xviii. 28). Finally we are told that the Sabbath on which the Jews did not wish the body of Jesus to remain on the cross was "a high day" (John xix. 31), viz., the first day of the feast, the crucifixion having taken place on the previous day.

Of these conflicting views it is the Johannine, and not the Synoptic, which commends itself as the inherently probable one. We know that the high-priests, scribes, and elders were nervously apprehensive of causing a riot during the feast by arresting Jesus (Mark xiv. 2; Matt. xxvi. 5; *cf.* Luke xxii. 2); it was therefore in itself most unlikely that they should have had the trial and execution on the actual day of the feast. Moreover, the transaction of legal business was forbidden on feast days, as well as the performance of every kind of labour; so that neither would Jesus have been tried on the 15th of Nisan, nor would the soldiers who took Him to execution have met Simon of Cyrene coming from the field—*i.e.*, from working in the field—and compelled him to carry the cross (Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26; *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 32). The Sanhedrin, the guardians of the Law, would not have so flagrantly violated its enactments, if not from principle, yet from expediency. On the other hand, when we read in 1 Cor. v. 7, "Our Passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ," the words are a reference to the tragic coincidence—a coincidence which could not but strike the Christian imagination—that the Lord had been crucified on the very day on which the paschal lamb was slain for the festive meal.

Taking, then, the 14th of Nisan—*i.e.*, probably, the 7th of April, A.D. 30—as the date of the crucifixion, and reckoning backwards from this *terminus ad quem*, we arrive at the following results:

Mark's narrative makes mention of five separate days, viz. :

(1) The day of the entry into Jerusalem, xi. 11.

(2) The day of the cleansing of the Temple, xi. 15–18.

(3) A day of controversies in Jerusalem, xi. 20 ff.

(4) The day of the last meal, the agony, the arrest, and the trial before the Sanhedrin, xiv. 12–72.

(5) The day of the trial before Pilate, and the crucifixion, chap. xv.

If we accept this scheme, the Lord's entry into Jerusalem took place on Monday, the 10th of Nisan. It must, however, be said, that this is not the only admissible interpretation even of Mark's data : we may also hold, again reckoning backwards from *Friday*, the day of the Passion, that the Evangelist tells us of the last common meal taking place on the *Thursday* ; the anointing at Bethany on the previous evening, viz., *Wednesday*; controversies in the Temple and the discourse concerning the Lord's return on the *Tuesday* ; the cursing of the fig-tree and the cleansing of the Temple on the *Monday* ; which would make the entry into Jerusalem fall on the *Sunday*. But this time-scheme is open to suspicion—not because Mark alone of the Evangelists interposes a night between the entry into the capital and the cleansing of the Temple (Mark xi. 11), on the ground that it was late in the day by the time the caravan arrived in Jerusalem, for this detail is not unlikely to be historical ; but because the story of the anointing at Bethany, xiv. 3–9, which on this calculation would fall on the Wednesday evening, is wedged in violently in the very middle of the verses relating to the conspiracy to kill Jesus, Mark xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11, which obviously form one paragraph. This is so favourite a mannerism of the Evangelist's that we are left in doubt whether the episode of the anointing belongs to this day at all ; and that doubt is increased by the Fourth Evangelist's distinct statement that this occurrence took place " six days before the Passover " (John xii. 1), which, in the Roman way of reckoning time, brings us back from Saturday, the day of the Passover, to Monday. The days were probably too crowded with events for anyone to have kept a perfectly trustworthy recollection as to the precise day when this or that incident happened ; so that we commit ourselves, though only tentatively, and with no pretension to absolute certainty, to the following scheme.[1]

Monday : Jesus arrives in Jerusalem late in the afternoon, inspects

[1] Certainty, indeed, is doubly out of the question, since passages like Mark xi. 19, xiv. 49 ; Matt. xxvi. 16 ; Luke xix. 47, xxi. 37, seem to imply a longer sojourn in the capital prior to the crucifixion.

the Temple, and returns for the night to Bethany, where a woman anoints Him at supper.[1]

Tuesday : He drives the sellers and money-changers from the Temple court, and at night goes forth out of the city.

Wednesday : He refuses to answer the Sanhedrin's interpellation as to His authority, but answers questions asked by Pharisees, Sadducees, and a scribe ; spends the night in the mount of Olives.

Thursday : Final appearance in the Temple. He denies the Davidic descent of the Messiah, inveighs against the scribes and Pharisees, predicts the destruction of the Temple, partakes of a last meal with the disciples, is arrested in the mount of Olives, and found guilty by the Sanhedrin.

Friday : The sentence is confirmed by Pilate, and executed forthwith.

The last stage of the pilgrims' way to Jerusalem, from Jericho to Jerusalem, covered a distance of fifteen miles, an uphill climb along a rocky, robber-infested defile, with so bad a reputation for scenes such as that described by Jesus in His story of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30–37) that it bore the name of " the bloody road." It is to this juncture, *i.e.*, as the caravan was approaching its destination, that Luke assigns the utterance of a parable which in the form in which he relates it is peculiar to him, though we find a closely similar one in Matthew's Gospel. Luke's parable of the Pounds (xix. 11–27) and Matthew's parable of the Talents (xxv. 14–30) are obviously variants of one original ; Luke, however, provides a highly interesting framework, which may or may not be authentic, but at which we must now glance. As Jerusalem came in sight, the joyous anticipations of the disciples probably gained the upper hand over their fears : their Master was about to enter the Holy City " to receive for Himself a kingdom," even the kingdom of David—how could they help exulting with this near prospect in view ? But Jesus, in order to subdue their exuberance—so Luke informs us—reminded them of a " nobleman " who had gone on a similar expedition, but whose people had sent an embassy after him, protesting against his appointment as their ruler ; was it not more than likely—this seems to be the implied hint—that the people of

[1] It is characteristic of the uncertain state of the tradition that even on such a relatively simple matter as the Lord's nightly sojourn during Passion Week our data diverge. For while according to Matt. xxi. 17 Jesus, after cleansing the Temple, " went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there," Mark xi. 19, after describing the same episode, tells us that " every evening He went forth out of the city," without naming Bethany ; and Luke xxi. 37 states explicitly that " every night He went out and lodged in the mount which is called the mount of Olives." Now the mount of Olives—a favourite night resort of pilgrims, who camped there in the open when the city was overcrowded—is not the same as Bethany, though an attempt is made in Mark xi. 1 to produce that impression by speaking of " Bethany, *at* the mount of Olives." If Jesus stayed at Bethany, it would be at a friend's house. We incline accordingly to the view that Mark is correct in stating that the Lord rested on the first (*i.e.*, Monday) night after His arrival at Bethany (xi. 11), but that He spent the succeeding ones in the mount of Olives, where on the Thursday night He was arrested.

Jerusalem might be at least as little inclined to acknowledge Him as their king? The historical event referred to would be well-known to the Palestinian circles in which the Gospel tradition grew, and still better known if the allusion was made by Jesus Himself to His companions; the latter would recall how Archelaus, the last semi-independent ruler of Judæa, whose splendid palace they had just seen at Jericho, had actually gone into a far country, viz., to the Roman Court, to be confirmed as "ethnarch" by the Emperor, but how the Jews had sent an embassy after him to protest against his suit being granted (Josephus, *Antt.* xvii. 9. 3). So far it is possible that Jesus Himself is speaking, and warning His followers that they must expect opposition and ill-will; on the other hand, the words may embody a later comment on the blindness of the Jews, who in rejecting their true and heaven-sent King had treated Him as if He were another Archelaus! This seems the likelier in view of the closing words of the story, "But as for these mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me"; these, assuredly, are not the sentiments of our Lord towards His opponents, but express the angry resentment felt in the early days of the Church against the hostile and unbelieving Jews, whom the persecuted Christians thought destined to suffer condign punishment at the coming of the Son of man, just as the Jews had cherished similar hopes concerning the fate of the heathen in the Day of the Lord.

And now the travellers had come to within a couple of miles from Jerusalem, to the region of neighbouring villages, Bethany and Bethphage, set in fig, olive, and almond-trees. The site of Bethphage, thought by some to have been an ecclesiastical suburb of Jerusalem, has not been identified; Bethany, since the fourth century, has been located at el-Azariyeh, "screened by an intervening ridge from the view of the top of Olivet, perched on its broken plateau of rock, the last collection of human habitations before the desert hills which reach to Jericho" (Stanley); the name is a corruption of Lazareion, *i.e.*, Lazarus' village. In Bethany, according to the Fourth Evangelist, Jesus had friends living, the sisters Martha and Mary (John xii. 1, 2); Luke had told of a visit of the Lord's to these two women (x. 38–42), but without mentioning the name of their village, and inserting the story in the so-called Samaritan ministry, where—even if there had been such a phase in the Lord's public career—it would have been out of place. We may accordingly assume that the incident

related by Luke happened at this stage, *i.e.*, when Jesus was approaching the capital; and that He rested a short time in the sister's house. The occurrence may be summed up in the fewest words. The tired Master is seated in the one living-room of the cottage, while a meal is being got ready for Him; Martha, desiring to honour her Guest, cannot do enough in the way of preparations, while Mary sits hero-worshipping at Jesus' feet, much to the practical Martha's annoyance, which at length finds vent in an appeal to the Lord Himself to ask Mary to help, instead of doing nothing. But Jesus really did not require a sumptuous repast, as Martha seemed to imagine; only the fewest things were needful to comfort, and so far from blaming Mary, she had, He said, chosen the good part: possibly her very quietness ministered to Him, while Martha's well-meant busyness fretted His nerves.

In any case—if we are right in placing this episode here—the visit to the house in Bethany would be a brief one, for a very important step was still to be taken before sundown, and from Mark's text we gather that the day was already well advanced; that step was the entry into Jerusalem, with regard to the manner of which Jesus had very specific intentions, requiring some measure of preparation. Since He was the destined Messiah, He must enter the Holy City (Mark xi. 1–11; Matt. xxi. 1–11; Luke xix. 29–44; John xii. 12–19) in a certain style, in accordance with the messianic prophecy in Zech. ix. 9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." It hardly needs to be said that the Lord adopted this method of entrance, not in order to prove Himself the Messiah, but from a sense of fitness, and because He felt that it behoved Him to fulfil the scripture. The Evangelists' account of the arrangements made, the directions given and carried out, the predictions uttered and verified, show the endeavour of tradition to transpose very simple events into the key of the supernatural; they also betray the influence of Old Testament reminiscence. When we read that Jesus despatched two of His disciples with the instruction that they would find "an ass tied, and a colt with her" (Matt. xxi. 2), the phrasing recalls Gen. xlix. 11, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." What no doubt really happened was that Jesus directed two of His followers to borrow an ass

from somewhere, with the promise—omitted by Matthew and Luke, but frankly recorded by Mark—that the animal would be immediately returned. Of supernatural prediction and fulfilment there was none, and the description of the ass—"whereon no man ever yet sat" (*cf.* Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7)—is obviously legendary, as such an animal would have made an unsafe and uncomfortable mount. The colt is duly found, brought to Jesus, some garments are spread over it, and Jesus rides the short distance from Bethany to Jerusalem at the head of His disciples, whose manifestations of enthusiasm attract a growing crowd.[1] The Synoptists' evident anxiety to invest the event with a marvellous character throws into stronger relief the simple statement of the Fourth Evangelist, who tells us only that "Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon" (John xii. 14).

Undoubtedly the procession was the occasion of joyous demonstrations, not only on the part of the disciples, but of other pilgrims who caught the contagion of enthusiasm. Religious excitement was in the air during those seasons of pilgrimage—religious excitement with which there mingled a good deal of political unrest and nationalist aspiration. The statement that the multitude spread their garments upon the way may or may not be a reminiscence from 2 Kings ix. 13, where the newly-anointed Jehu is the object of a similar act of homage; the recorded shouts of welcome, "Hosanna to the son of David"[2] (Matt. xxi. 9), "Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke xix. 38), "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David" (Mark xi. 10), are obviously adaptations, *ad hoc*, of Ps. cxviii. 25, 26, where no messianic meaning is even remotely intended. The question, then, arises whether Jesus, riding into Jerusalem at the head of His followers, was making a messianic entry, in the sense of a revelation to all and sundry of His messianic secret—whether it was a public claim to Messiahship, publicly interpreted as such. That it was such, could be no other, is the view almost universally held; it is, nevertheless, one which we are compelled to regard as critically untenable.

The true account of the matter seems rather to be that while Jesus meant His entry to be the fulfilment of a messianic

[1] Matthew's unhappy *penchant* for duplications, and his failure to understand the use of parallelism in Zechariah's prophecy, which he imagines to refer to *two* animals, leads him to speak of both an ass and a colt being brought, and to represent Jesus as riding on both. [2] See Note C, on p. 362.

prophecy, He did not mean its messianic character to be obvious to the people, but intended rather to guard His messianic secret to the last; and further, that in this He was entirely successful. In the first place, to enter the capital riding on an ass was not to declare His Messiahship to the multitudes. The ass has been a common mount in the East, from the days of Balaam the son of Peor to our own days; strangers riding into the Holy City on such animals were to be seen any day, so that such a spectacle would not in itself have excited special attention, far less suggested a messianic claim on the Rider's part, even if everybody had had all the messianic prophecies at his fingers' ends. In the second, it is to be noted that all the recorded exclamations of the multitude, coloured as they are in our text by subsequent belief in Jesus as the Messiah, do not in so many words acclaim Him as such: the crowd gives cheers for the coming Kingdom, the forthcoming restoration of the Davidic monarchy, and for him who cometh in the name of the Lord. The latter designation points most probably, but by no means necessarily, to Jesus; and even if it does so, it does not hail Him unmistakably as the Messiah. The language used is quite compatible with the theory that the people regarded Jesus, not as Himself the destined King—there was nothing in His appearance to suggest such a view—but as that King's forerunner, the promised Elijah, whose coming would be assuredly conceived as "in the name of the Lord."

But further, we have the best reason for declaring positively that the people at large did *not* interpret the Lord's entry into Jerusalem as a messianic act; for we read in Matt. xxi. 10, 11 that when Jesus came into the city, and the question arose, "Who is this?" the multitudes said, "This is *the prophet*, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." Now the Messiah was not a prophet, neither could a prophet be the Messiah; had the multitudes thought Jesus the latter, they would not have designated Him by a less exalted title.

Nor is even this the whole of the evidence. When we reach the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, we shall see the attempt being made, and failing for lack of satisfactory evidence (Mark xiv. 56) to procure a conviction against Him on a charge of having spoken certain words against the Temple. When this charge has broken down, and when accordingly there is a chance that the Victim may escape, then and then only the high priest asks Jesus outright whether He claims to be the Messiah; and, on receiving His answer, the high priest exclaims with evident

relief, "What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?"—and the result is a unanimous sentence of death (Mark xiv. 61–64). Now if Jesus had openly claimed to be the Messiah, it is strange that the proceedings against Him should not have begun with this accusation, which would have been so easy to prove; strange that the prosecution did not point to the "messianic entry," if the entry was indeed messianic; strange that the Sanhedrin troubled to raise other charges, which they had in effect to abandon, because they could not be sustained; strange that, instead of calling witnesses to Jesus' messianic pretensions—witnesses of whom there must have been plenty, had the claim been publicly made—the high priest should have had to make the Accused incriminate Himself by an admission which rendered witnesses unnecessary.

We conclude that Jesus, though absolutely assured of His Messiahship, and embodying His assurance in the manner of His entry, which was messianic *to Him*, but not to the crowd, did not divulge His secret to the multitude; it is even possible, as the Fourth Evangelist hints (John xii. 16), that the disciples themselves did not understand the meaning of the Lord's riding into the city on an ass's colt until later—and if not the disciples, how much less the concourse of pilgrims and the populace of Jerusalem? The importance of the point which we have been trying to establish—the Lord's resolute preservation of the messianic secret—in its bearing upon the final development of events, will become apparent in due course.

Amid scenes of considerable excitement, all hearts astir with the feeling that the Kingdom was indeed at hand, the procession had passed within the city walls; no doubt it was pious imagination which magnified these demonstrations, in which perhaps several hundred persons took part, into an event by which "all the city was stirred" (Matt. xxi. 10), for Jerusalem harboured at the time of the feast a population of many hundred thousands, only a small fraction of whom would have any knowledge of the events which had just been enacted. It is indeed not only possible but probable that the greater part of the pilgrims who had come to celebrate that particular Passover left for their homes without so much as having heard that a Galilean Rabbi had been put to death the day before the festival. Still, taking even such a restricted view of the excitement which accompanied the Lord's entry, within its own area that

excitement must have been intense: now was the moment, one would think, when Jesus, profiting by the ferment around Him, would have carried out His purpose of making a demonstration in the Temple—for we shall see that He acted, when He came to act, not on the impulse of the moment, but on a considered plan, with a definite end in view—and both Matthew and Luke represent this as the course of events, and the cleansing of the Temple as following immediately upon the Lord's arrival in the city.

Such, however, is not Mark's account; according to him, Jesus did indeed visit the Temple, but, "having looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, He went out into Bethany with the Twelve" (Mark xi. 11). It must be confessed that this produces all the effect of an anti-climax, but may for that very reason be true, as one can imagine no adequate reason for its being invented. All the same, it is impossible not to ask oneself what became of that clamouring, enthusiastic throng, and why their excitement seems to have so suddenly subsided; to say the least, their tumultuous acclamations present a curious contrast to this quiet retirement to Bethany, the manner of which suggests the private visitor rather than the Leader of a popular movement. Had the city been stirred as a whole, or even largely, matters could not have fallen out thus. If we accept Mark's version—and we do so with only a qualified confidence—then the explanation of that inspection of the Temple would seem to be that it was in the nature of a reconnaissance, a preliminary survey of the territory in view of the exploit planned for the morrow.

In either case—whether, *i.e.*, before or after executing this plan—Jesus spent that first (Monday) night in Bethany; and to this evening we shall assign, for the reasons stated above, the anointing of the Lord by an unnamed woman which Mark records as having taken place two days later (Mark xiv. 3–9; Matt. xxvi. 6–13). It must be acknowledged that the tradition is in a very confused state. Matthew, indeed, follows Mark even down to details, but he is only an echo; Luke on the other hand does not relate this incident at all, because he has already told a similar anecdote in his Galilean section, where we read of Jesus at supper in the house of a Pharisee named Simon, when a woman who was a sinner came in, wept at the feet of the Lord, and anointed Him with the contents of an alabaster cruse (Luke vii. 36–50). When we turn to the Fourth Gospel (John xii. 1–8), the incident is indeed narrated as taking place in

Bethany, on the Monday preceding the Passover, but the scene is the house of Martha and Mary, and by a quite extraordinary licence of reconstruction on the Evangelist's part it is Mary who anoints Jesus. These conflicting details prove, of course, nothing against there being some real foundation for the story, or stories; a quite conceivable solution of the difficulty would be this—that both the Lucan narrative of the woman who was a sinner, and the Marcan one which tells of the anointing at Bethany, refer to incidents which really happened, but that Luke erroneously borrowed the name of the Lord's host and the detail of the cruse of ointment, while the Fourth Evangelist reshaped the whole episode with his peculiar superiority to mere history.

What Mark tells us, and what we have no reason to doubt, is that while Jesus was at supper in Bethany in the house of one Simon, a leper, a woman whose name is not given but who must have been an enthusiastic disciple, acting on the impulse of a boundless admiration, poured some exceedingly precious ointment over the Master's head. It may well be that her intuition penetrated His secret, that her homage to the Lord was symbolic in intention, a chrism which was to signify that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Messiah; in any case it was not an act to be measured in terms of currency. Yet that was precisely the measurement which some of those present used—Mark says "some," Matthew "the disciples" generally, the Fourth Evangelist "Judas Iscariot," whom he denounces at the same time as a thief. They were incensed at the woman's extravagance; applying, with the literalness of small minds, the Lord's precept, "Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor," they argue that if this ointment had only been sold, it might have realized an enormous sum, three hundred denarii—a purely fanciful computation—and the poor would have benefited to the same extent. But Jesus has another standard for the woman's offering than money or money's worth, because He sees the intention shining through the outward act; with a touch of irritation He reproves the unintelligently zealous disciples, whose officiousness must have been peculiarly exasperating to Him at that moment. He is full of the coming events, of His impending death, and it seems to Him that there was an unintentional appropriateness about the woman's deed—she had anointed Him, who was already considering Himself as dead, for burial. Did He, or did the Evangelist, predict that wherever the Gospel should be preached, the splendid generosity which this devoted spirit

had shown should likewise be recorded " for a memorial of her " ? In either case, the prediction has come true.

On the Tuesday morning, then (Mark xi. 12–14 ; Matt. xxi. 18–22), Jesus and His companions set out from Bethany for Jerusalem, there to challenge the hostile forces where they were most strongly entrenched ; but before he brings us to that incident, viz., the cleansing of the Temple, which in the other Synoptics belongs to the Monday, Mark tells us one of the most puzzling anecdotes in the whole range of the Gospel tradition. Jesus, we are told, feeling the pangs of hunger as He walked along, and seeing a fig-tree in full leaf, went to look for fruit on its branches, although it was not the season for figs to ripen, but at least two months before fruit could be reasonably expected. Failing to find what He sought, and keenly disappointed, He is said to have pronounced a malediction on the tree, saying, " No man eat fruit from thee henceforth and for ever " ; and on the following morning, as they passed the same way, it was duly found that the curse had taken effect, and the tree had withered from the roots. In Matthew's version we read that the tree withered away immediately, without the interval of twenty-four hours ; the latter is possibly a literary device of Mark's, who is fond of these intercalations,[1] but for the rest the story is the same, except that Matthew does not mention that Jesus was hungry, nor that it was not the season of figs.

The difficulty presented by this alleged incident has but little to do with the miracle as such : not that Jesus could cause a tree to wither, but that He should have uttered a malediction on a tree for no other reason than that it did not bear fruit out of due season, is what chiefly impresses the reader. Instinctively we hesitate to credit Jesus with what looks an act of mere childish petulance. Nor is the matter mended by the supposed lesson from the occurrence, viz., that it exemplified the power of faith to effect what it really believed to be possible, however impossible it might appear, or of prayer to obtain what it asked without doubt. That explanation is palpably dragged in by the hairs, and so is Peter's marvelling observation, which introduces it, " Behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away." Peter's remark and the answer it receives are afterthoughts, probably on the part of the Evangelist himself, who wondered, on the one hand, what caused the tree to shrivel up, and on the

[1] We notice such in chap. iii. 20, 21, 31–35, v. 21–24, 35–43, vi. 7–13, 30 ff., xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11 ; another instance occurs in chap. xiv. 54, 66–72.

other, what edifying lesson such an event could be held to embody, and who therefore reintroduces the Lord's saying about faith removing mountains (Matt. xvii. 20).[1]

As a matter of fact, there is no edification to be gained from a miracle which is not only pointless, but presents Jesus in a mood of irrational annoyance with an inanimate object; but fortunately we are not without guidance as to the probable origin of the anecdote. Once more, as in the case of the anointing of the Lord at Bethany, we find that Luke is silent on the cursing of the fig-tree, which both Mark and Matthew record; and once more Luke's silence is due to the circumstance that he has already utilized the same or similar material on a different occasion, and in a different form. In chap. xiii. 6–9 he tells us a parable of Jesus—itself reminiscent of the vineyard parable in Isa. v. 1–7—concerning a fig-tree which a man had in a corner of his vineyard, and which year after year refused to bear, so that its owner at length, having again and again come to seek fruit and finding none, gave instructions to his vinedresser to cut it down, as it was not merely cumbering but wasting the ground on which something else might have grown; only at the vinedresser's request did he consent to give the tree another year's trial, with the proviso that if it did not do better within that period of grace, it was to be hewn down as a failure. This parable belongs to a group of utterances in which the Lord, ardent lover of Israel as He was, takes up the thought of more than one of the old prophets that, if the nation remained stubborn and unresponsive to the Divine appeal, there was nothing to hinder God from depriving it of the privileged position which it did not know how to use, and conferring His favour upon another. The possibility of Israel's rejection by God, threatened in Isaiah's similitude, was a most painful thought for the prophet, and must have been no less so for our Lord; but, face to face with Israel's hardness of heart, He did not shrink from contemplating its probable result, and embodied His reflections on the subject in the parable of the barren fig-tree. There is nothing to hinder us from supposing that He may have uttered that parable on this very occasion, on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem; it is at least a possibility that the image was suggested to Him by a withered or withering tree which He noticed in passing. The parable is regarded by many as the basis of the story of His cursing the fig-tree, which we read in Mark and Matthew;

[1] The saying is apposite in Matthew's setting, where it is used *à propos* of the cure of the epileptic boy, but very inapposite to this story of a malediction.

not the only instance, as we know, in which the Master's figurative language was taken in its literal meaning.

It was less than an hour's walk from the village which had sheltered Jesus during the night to the capital; and, once arrived within its gates, He had only to traverse a few streets ere He found Himself at one of the gates giving access to the Temple itself. Upon anyone whose eye was not dulled with use, that magnificent and nobly-planned sanctuary could not but make an overwhelming impression; an architectural marvel, there gathered round it the reverence, the religious hopes and aspirations, of a whole race. We may be sure that the impressiveness of the sacred building, though He was no stranger to it, came home once more in all its fullness to Jesus, as He crossed its threshold; but it served only the more to confirm Him in the purpose which had taken shape in Him—the resolution, by one superlatively bold stroke to set in motion those forces which would compel the Kingdom to appear.

This attempt is told at the greatest length by Mark, more briefly by Matthew, and in still fewer words by Luke; it is only when we realize the object which impelled the Lord, that we shall properly understand the scene which the Evangelists record for us (Mark xi. 15–19; Matt. xxi. 12, 13; Luke xix. 45, 46; *cf.* John ii. 13–22).

As Jesus and His companions reached the outer court of the Temple—a vast area, twelve hundred feet in length and six hundred in width, surrounding the sacred edifice itself—they found, as of course they knew they would find, the Temple fair in full swing, a lively trafficking and chaffering sanctioned by long usage, and probably suggestive to none of those who took part in it of special irreverence. The Temple worship and its sacrificial system were directly responsible for a great deal of trade and industry, which attained to immense proportions at the time of the great pilgrimages. Wine and corn and oil and incense, cattle and doves were for sale, bankers were busy exchanging foreign money into its Greek and Roman equivalents, or into the half-shekel (didrachma) which constituted the Temple tax, a coin specially reserved for this sacred payment. We can readily imagine that the scene would be marked by all the vivacity and excitement of an Oriental bazaar; we shall also admit that the traders were there for profit, that their numbers quite probably included dishonest individuals, and bear in mind the not unimportant fact that the priests were financially interested in this traffic, from which a portion of their revenues

was derived. No doubt to the sensitive eye, the mind attuned to spiritual things, this spectacle of buying and selling within the precincts of the Temple was the reverse of edifying ; but this " Court of the Gentiles," as its name implies, was not part of the Temple, nor was its soil sacred, any more than the open spaces surrounding many cathedrals. Since sacrifices had to be offered, they had to be purchased somewhere, and that the nearer the sanctuary the better—just as the devout Catholic is conscious of no incongruity in buying in the church itself the candles he is going to light before the altar. That anyone engaged in the proceedings was conscious of offering an affront to God is entirely improbable ; the purchasers at any rate were there on what they regarded as religious business, and of the traders and brokers none would be aware of doing anything but carrying on their legitimate pursuits.

Suddenly, in the midst of this gay and animated scene, there arises an uproar ; some visitors from Galilee, from motives no one can understand, are making what looks like an entirely unprovoked attack upon the sellers and money-changers, overturning seats and tables, while their Leader exclaims, in words borrowed from the ancient prophets : " It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations " (Isa. lvi. 7), " but ye have made it a den of robbers " (Jer. vii. 11). A violent commotion, a brief *mêlée*, ensued, during which the same Leader made use of an exclamation (John ii. 19) which even a few days later was no longer correctly remembered, but which was represented by His enemies as a boast that He would destroy the Temple, and in three days raise it up. Unquestionably the deed of the Galilean pilgrims and their Master would excite genuine religious horror, for it would be interpreted as an act of brawling in the precincts of the holy place, and that horror would be intensified by the report of the words said to have been uttered by the ringleader of the disturbance ; for the Temple was regarded by all Jews with mingled veneration and affection, and to speak of its destruction was to touch Jewish feeling in its most sensitive place. Nevertheless, we are told, the onslaught was entirely successful, so much so that according to Mark xi. 16 Jesus " would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple "—which looks like an occupation of the whole area by superior force, if not even a holding up of the services ; moreover, there was no intervention on the part of the Temple guard, who were there for the very purpose of maintaining order, and might have arrested or at any rate expelled the disturber,

while the authorities refrained from action because they "feared Him."

A whole number of questions starts to the mind as we read the narratives depicting this incident. How was it physically possible for Jesus, even if He was aided by His disciples, to rout the multitudinous sellers and money-changers, and practically to make Himself master of the situation for all that day? Why did not the authorities assert themselves? What did He mean by those words—if He uttered them—about destroying the Temple, and building it again in three days? Can this occurrence, as the Fourth Evangelist avers, have taken place at the beginning of the Lord's ministry? Above all, what was His motive for the whole episode, which apparently led to nothing?

That this raid on the Temple should belong to the earliest phase of the Lord's activity, as the Fourth Gospel asserts, is inconceivable; after such a public affront to the Jewish religion, which centred in the Temple, He could never have carried on a successful ministry in Galilee, for the report of His deed would have preceded Him, and aroused invincible prejudice against Him everywhere. The Johannine writer is simply reshaping history, here as elsewhere, in accordance with his conception of the Person of Christ.

In the next place, it really was a physical impossibility for Jesus to effect anything like the general stampede recorded in the Gospels. There was a *fracas* in one spot or corner of that vast, congested market, a momentary tumult, which our accounts naturally exaggerate, as they exaggerate the proportions of the demonstration attending the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, or the number of those who partook of the lake-side Eucharist; but after raging for a short space, a louder note in that Babel of voices, the commotion probably subsided or collapsed, and the ordinary proceedings continued. The very fact that the guards did not intervene proves that the affray was not worth their intervention; as for the priests, their "fear" was probably fear of the Roman garrison in the Antonia barracks overlooking the Temple court from the north-west, whom any real riot would have brought on the scene with possibly disastrous consequences—it was better to let this Galilean firebrand make His futile protest and withdraw than to use force which might have provoked disorders more difficult to quench.

As for the phrase about destroying the Temple, some such words were in all probability spoken by Jesus, but their exact form had become irrecoverable even seventy-two hours after, when He was

charged with having used them (Mark xiv. 58 ; Matt. xxvi. 61),and we are left to surmises. The ingenious interpretation given by the Fourth Evangelist, viz., that Jesus referred to the Temple of His Body (John ii. 21), may be put on one side : a man in a situation full of risk and excitement does not indulge in veiled allegorical language. It is possible that He said, " Even if this Temple be destroyed, God will raise up another in the shortest time," viz., at the establishment of the Kingdom—thus expressing an apocalyptic hope concerning a Temple of God, a house not made with hands, which should be a feature of the coming era, a hope of which we find traces elsewhere in the New Testament. That He Himself threatened to destroy the existing sanctuary was either a misunderstanding or a malicious perversion of His words, though it was readily believed by His enemies, and repeated as a taunt at His crucifixion (Mark xv. 29 ; Matt. xxvii. 40).

But what, we ask again, was the object of Jesus in taking this provocative action at all ? He could not hope to enlist public sympathy on His side by such a deed, to make a bid for popular favour, to commend Himself to the multitudes as the Messiah ; His proceeding would be considered as disrespectful to the Temple, and so to religion itself, and accordingly as incompatible with any messianic claims—it was an exploit which could not but alienate support from Him. Again, Jesus was quite familiar with the Temple fair, and must have witnessed it on many occasions ; His was not the case of a provincial from some world-remote district, shocked and carried beyond all restraints by the spectacle of Babylon's profusion and luxury. The idea of a sudden, unpremeditated outburst of pious indignation may be dismissed altogether ; while the theory that He sank momentarily below His own level to that of a religious demagogue, but came back to His better self next day, need be mentioned only in order to be rejected.

We have no doubt at all that the *coup* which we call the cleansing of the Temple had been carefully planned, and deliberately put into execution by Jesus ; and we suggest that it was most probably a messianic act, in the same sense in which His entry into the capital was a messianic entry—*i.e.*, it was so to Him, though not to the general public—a carrying out of messianic prophecy, which He deemed it His duty to fulfil, just because He was the Messiah. There were two such oracles, which may well have been in His mind, and determined Him to make His raid on the traffickers in the Temple, viz., Mal. iii. 1–3 and

Zech. xiv. 21. "Behold, I send My messenger," writes the last of the prophets, "and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple. . . . But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? . . . He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Yahveh offerings in righteousness." This read almost like an instruction to the Messiah of how to proceed; and when Zechariah closes his book with the prophecy that "in that day"—viz., the Day of Yahveh—"there shall be no more a trafficker in the house of Yahveh of hosts," it is difficult to believe that these words had no share in shaping the Lord's action.

He meant to do what the Scriptures foretold that Messiah should do; but moreover, in fulfilling these ancient predictions, He was also going to carry out the one supreme object with which He had come to Jerusalem. *That object was to die, as the necessary preliminary of the coming of the Kingdom: and His forcible demonstration in the Temple court was the means by which He expected to "accomplish His decease in Jerusalem"* (Luke ix. 31). The driving-out of the traffickers from the house of Yahveh was ordained from of old; but nothing was more likely than that it would be accompanied by an affray in which Jesus Himself and possibly some of His disciples would fall. That was the fire which He had come to cast upon the earth, the baptism He had to be baptized with (Luke xii. 49, 50). Jesus, like those men of violence, those passionate lovers of the Kingdom with whom He sympathized, had sought to take the Kingdom by force, and to give His life in order to compel its advent.

Viewed in its immediate effects, His project, assured of success as He deemed it, had miscarried. The expected conflagration was not kindled, or at any rate spread only over so limited an area as made it easy of extinction; the authorities, too, saw no necessity for intervention other than a belated protest. As Jesus returned from the Temple that day, it must have been with a sense of frustrated purpose, while the disciples, unable to fathom the Master's intention, could only ruefully marvel at this ineffectual adventure, which was bound to turn the people's feelings against Him, and must militate against His chances of recognition as the Messiah. For the moment, whether from His own point of view or from theirs, He had failed; He had meant to die, and His offering had apparently not been accepted. It was a dark riddle. The woman who had anointed

Him the night before "for the burying," as He called it, had seemingly performed her office in vain.

But only seemingly; for the delay was brief. From that moment onward the priests sought to destroy Him, and that, preferably, before the beginning of the Feast. They must not risk a tumult of the people, which might give the Roman governor a pretext for letting his soldiery loose upon them. Henceforth events moved quickly. It was on the Tuesday morning before the Passover that Jesus had delivered His assault on the citadel; within three days He was to attain the object which had inspired Him, and to give up His life for the Kingdom's sake.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE REJOINED

We have already found it necessary to warn the reader against assuming that, because the Gospel records of Passion Week are so much more copious than they have been up to that point, they supply us with either a close-knit, or a continuous, or a complete narrative of these last days. The truth to be borne steadily in mind is that the evangelical tradition has preserved only a few outstanding incidents and anecdotes belonging to even that closing period, and that our canvas, while crowded in appearance, is not a little confused in reality. It is not to be wondered at that men, even after a few years, did not remember exactly on what day this conflict took place, or that saying was uttered—a fact which becomes evident when Luke, *e.g.*, tells us quite generally that a certain highly important encounter between the Lord and His opponents "came to pass *on one of the days*, as He was teaching the people in the temple" (Luke xx. 1). There was doubtless a strong desire to fit these last events within the framework of one week, and too much reliance must not be placed on the resulting arrangements adopted by the Evangelists, any one of which is open to criticism, any one of which leaves vast blanks that cannot be filled.

The Evangelists no doubt convey to us an essentially accurate impression in so far as they make us feel that this last phase consisted of a continuous battle; what we have to realize is that it was from the outset an unequal, a losing battle, in which the Master's argumentative victories, which our sacred writers delight to chronicle, must not disguise from us that His enemies were only waiting the opportunity for delivering the final blow. Jesus knew this quite well, and was under no illusions as to the issue; but inasmuch as that issue—His death—was precisely the one He sought, His adversaries served only as the unconscious instruments of that masterful will of His which in moulding His own fate moulded all subsequent history.

For the moment, as we saw, He had failed to bring about the result which might so easily have followed from His forcible intervention in the Temple mart. With so much inflammable material lying about, He had felt sure that He need only apply the lighted torch of a deliberately provocative act to set the whole on fire; but that plan had disappointed His expectations, and instead of finding His end in the violent commotion that was to ensue, He had been allowed to retire from the scene, with nothing accomplished save the alienation of a certain amount of popular sympathy. From the disciples' point of view the failure of that demonstration, if not less pronounced, wore a different aspect: success, as they understood it, might have been within Jesus' grasp, had He that morning—or, better still, on the previous afternoon, when enthusiasm was at its height—proclaimed Himself as the Messiah; in that case He might have carried a considerable proportion of the people with Him, while now they were merely puzzled by His strange and withal so ineffectual outburst. But Jesus had not aimed at such outward success, nor had He meant to proclaim Himself the Messiah in the only sense in which the populace could have understood such a proclamation; the failure *for Him* consisted in the fact that He had not there and then been baptized with the baptism of blood He anticipated, a baptism which was necessary in order that He might return as the Son of man, and inaugurate the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, this initial check did not baffle Him; if not in one way, then in another, He would accomplish His end.

We shall accordingly interpret His reappearances in the Temple on the two following days—Wednesday and Thursday—aright if we see in them a direct challenge to the official powers to do their worst against Him. He would rejoin the battle, attacking again and again, till the authorities should have no alternative but to strike. That Jesus had firmly expected to be seized, perhaps to be killed, upon that public and historic scene, comes out in the words He uttered at His arrest: "I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye took Me not" (Mark xiv. 49). But though His adversaries shrank from such publicity—for they had everything to fear from a riot which might have assumed unlooked-for dimensions—it is certain that each of their encounters with Him confirmed them in their purpose to remove this obnoxious Galilean as soon as a suitable opportunity presented itself.

On the morrow, then, of that unsuccessful raid, Jesus and His

disciples again presented themselves in the Temple court, where their appearance, after what had happened, could not fail to provoke excitement, not unmixed with apprehension, in officialdom. The Sanhedrin had not intervened the day before, being content to let a regrettable incident flicker out of its own accord—possibly after a scuffle such as would not be an unprecedented event amid these eager and excitable buyers and sellers. But in the interval they would have made inquiries as to the identity of this stranger, and have learnt that this was none other than the Nazarene Rabbi whose agitation had caused so much offence in his own province the year before, and who had disappeared after they had despatched a commission to counteract his mischievous and unorthodox activity. If this troubler of their peace had re-emerged from exile, actually presenting himself in the Temple at the season of the Passover, worse disturbances than those of yesterday were to be feared; and, pending more serious measures, the Council must at least pronounce a warning, to show that they were not to be defied.

Probably they had given instructions to be immediately informed, should Jesus enter the sacred precincts again; there must at any rate be no repetition of such a disorderly scene as the previous day had witnessed. When, therefore, they heard that He had not only arrived in the Temple, but was addressing a crowd, they sent an official deputation—(the description of this body, "The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders," reads rather as if the whole Sanhedrin had gone to conduct this business, but that is unlikely)—to call Him to account for His proceedings, and to ask Him with what right He had arrogated to Himself the function of keeping order in the Temple court, a function which belonged to them, the constituted rulers. Why had He usurped their authority—by what authority had He acted?[1] Both their query and the Lord's answer furnish still further evidence against the view that His entry into the capital had been a public manifestation of His messianic claims; had it been understood as such, they would hardly have asked Him what was the authority which He arrogated to Himself, for they would have known—and on the same supposition He would have replied, "By the authority given to Me as the Messiah." That He does not do so, that He avoids a direct answer, shows that He was still guarding His messianic secret, which He had therefore

[1] The present tense in which the question is couched might suggest that the intervention of the Sanhedrin followed *immediately* on the attempted expulsion of the traffickers, or that "this" for which the Lord was to give His authority was His preaching; but we need not suppose that we have the *ipsissima verba* of the deputation.

not divulged to the multitudes the day before. Instead of satisfying His questioners, He meets their interrogation—quite in the manner of the rabbis—with a counter-question, framed with great quickness of wit : He will comply with their request for information concerning Himself, if *they* will first tell Him whether they regarded the baptism of John as Divinely sanctioned or only a human invention. As a means of parrying the Sanhedrin's stroke, this question, asked in the most public manner, was extremely well chosen, while at the same time it suggested by implication that His authority was from the same quarter as the Baptist's had been. The officials were placed in a dilemma ; they could not answer in either way without damaging themselves. However little they themselves believed in the Divine character of John's mission, they could not say so without estranging the masses, who believed in John as a prophet ; while to admit it was to provoke the deadly rejoinder, " Then why did you not show your sympathy in his lifetime ? " In this predicament—doubly galling, because they had so obviously underrated the intellectual calibre of their Opponent—the Sanhedrists chose to say nothing, either confessing their inability to answer, or refusing to do so : they had not come to be cross-examined by this upstart ! Whereupon Jesus equally refused to name His authority, in a manner which made it quite clear to the crowd that He claimed the same source on inspiration as the great desert-preacher, whose name was sufficient to arouse the liveliest popular emotions.

But although His immediate object had been still to preserve His messianic secret, He would not content Himself with a mere dialectical triumph over the discomfited councillors. Had He wished at that moment to enlist public support on His own behalf, He could not have done better than to present Himself to His listeners as a prophet of the same type as John, charged with the same message—to do so would have ensured His safety against the hostilities of the priesthood. But His aim was not to ensure His safety, but the very reverse, and accordingly He followed up His victory with an attack so direct and unsparing as to rouse the Sanhedrists to a fury of resentment. Under the guise of a parable of Two Sons (Matt. xxi. 28–32), one of whom refused to fulfil his father's command but proved better than his word, while the other promised obedience but failed to act up to his promise, He compared the official leaders of the people, greatly to their disadvantage, with the lowest elements of the population : for the latter, sinful as they were, had believed in John, while

they, the pattern religionists, with their professions of loyalty to God, had spurned God's prophet, the Baptist: wherefore, Jesus said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you!"

There is no softening down the extraordinary and, strictly speaking, excessive harshness of these words; they were intentionally provocative, designed—like the whole of Jesus' conduct in Jerusalem—to precipitate the catastrophe, and it was doubtless after this parable, preserved only by Matthew, that the authorities "sought to lay hold on Him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that He spake the parable against them: and they left Him, and went away" (Mark xii. 12) to devise measures against Him. For the moment His reference to John had rallied popular feeling on the side of Jesus: the people were not going to have One who was evidently a champion and admirer of the Baptist interfered with by the far from popular aristocratic priesthood, whose unsympathetic attitude towards that heroic figure they had neither forgotten nor forgiven. Quite possibly it is to this occasion—*i.e.*, when Jesus paid His posthumous tribute to John by declaring his mission from God—that we should refer the words, "The common people heard Him gladly," which appear out of their true context in Mark xii. 37; for the issue between the Baptist and the hierarchy was that between religious democracy and priestly aristocracy, and by identifying His cause with John's, though only by implication, Jesus had made an effective appeal to popular sentiment.

The parable of the Two Sons, and its sharp application to the religious authorities, although we find it only in one Gospel, strikes the reader as both appropriate to the situation, and as marked by that simplicity of idea and structure which is characteristic of the Lord's genuine similitudes. It must be confessed that a very different impression is conveyed by the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, which, though all three Synoptists assign it to the same context (Mark xii. 1–10; Matt. xxi. 33–44; Luke xx. 9–18), presents the greatest and gravest difficulties. The owner of a vineyard, we are told, having done his best by his property, equipping it with winepress and watch-tower, and surrounding it with a hedge for protection, lets it out and goes abroad. At harvest-time he sends a messenger to receive part of the produce in lieu of rent, but his tenants maltreat his agent, and refuse payment. A second messenger fares worse, a third is killed outright, and the same fate overtakes an indefinite

number of others. At length the owner sends his " beloved son " (*cf.* Mark i. 11, ix. 7) to demand what is due to him, feeling certain that the tenants will treat him with respect ; they, however, kill him just because he is the heir, and because they argue that, if he is removed, the property will be theirs. Then, and then only, the owner rouses himself to action against his tenants, whom he " destroys," and transfers the lease of the vineyard to others, in fulfilment—though the appositeness is not very evident —of the scripture which speaks of the stone which the builders rejected being made the headstone of the corner.

Now on almost every ground the authenticity of this parable stands suspect. We need not lay undue stress on the fact that the image of the vineyard which disappointed its owner's legitimate hopes of fruits is taken over directly from Isa. v. 1, 2, even down to details of phrasing, for we have already seen that another parable of the Lord's—that of the barren fig-tree (Luke xiii. 6–9) —is derived from the same source, without being therefore any less genuine. What gives us pause as we read this story of the wicked husbandmen, is its piling-up of improbabilities, which distinguishes it sharply from the sweet reasonableness that is one of the main characteristics of the authentic similitudes of Jesus. If the owner of the vineyard " went into another country," it is altogether unlikely that he would have stipulated for payment in the form of produce instead of money. If he did not receive his due the first year, he was hardly likely to wait until the next harvest, and then to send another messenger, on the chance of finding his tenants more amenable ; with each successive year his method becomes more quixotic, while there is absolutely no ground for the assumption that people who have already killed a number of messengers, with equal callousness and impunity, will respect the owner's son, especially when he appears in their midst unattended—a further improbability. Quite incredible, too, is the reasoning of the tenants, that if they kill the heir the property will become theirs ; even common criminals are not so stupid as to draw such a far-fetched inference. Finally, if the owner was in a position all along to use force, one wonders why he should have waited till his son had been killed ; on the other hand it is quite obvious that no private landlord was able to take the law into his own hands and " destroy " his refractory tenants, however morally justified such a course might have been.

Of course the allegory—for it is allegory rather than parable, Jesus' true medium—is clear enough ; too clear to be authentic in His mouth. The owner is God, the wicked husbandmen are

the Jews, especially their official representatives ; God's vineyard of revealed and saving truth had been committed to their care, but when He asked for fruits by His messengers the prophets, they were either ill-treated or killed. At last He sent His own beloved Son, Jesus,[1] but He too met with His death at the hands of the hierarchy, with the result that God took away the vineyard from those who were not worthy of it, and gave it to others, *i.e.*, the gentiles. Then we have a brusque change of imagery, as a quotation from Ps. cxviii. 22, 23 takes the place of the simile from Isa. v. 1, 2, ; this, too—the stone which the builders rejected, and which became the head of the corner—is applied as a prophecy to Jesus, as we find it applied in Acts iv. 11 and 1 Peter ii. 7.

We say without hesitation that all this is far too detailed and definite to be traceable to Jesus Himself ; this prediction, addressed to the Sanhedrin, that they would put Him to death, and of the punishment which would follow on such a misdeed—a prediction which they understand perfectly, and which does not in the least deter them from committing that very crime—is as unlikely as Jesus' scarcely veiled claim to be God's only Son (" the Heir "). Had He made that claim, there would have been no need for the high-priest, ere the week had run its course, to ask Him on oath whether He professed to be " the Son of the Blessed." We have in this allegory the production, not of the mind of Jesus, but of the early Christian community in its acute controversy with Judaism. It is probable enough that the Lord had in the course of His teaching quoted the familiar vineyard image of Isaiah, laying renewed emphasis on the old prophetic warning that Israel's privileges would be taken away from the unworthy nation, and given to another ; but the allegorical elaboration of the idea, as it meets us in the Synoptics, bears all the marks of a later date and a different mental calibre.

Similar considerations apply to the parable of the Great Supper, which Matthew introduces in this place (Matt. xxii. 1–14), while Luke assigns it to the period of the Samaritan ministry (Luke xiv. 16–24). In the form in which either Evangelist relates it, we cannot regard it as having Jesus for its author. The features common to both versions are the invitation issued to partake of the feast, the refusal of the invited guests, the natural annoyance of the host, and the further invitation given to a miscellaneous collection—a crowd called in from the streets—to enjoy the good things which those originally asked had declined. In a very

[1] This sounds like a reminiscence from Rom. viii. 32, " He that spared not His own Son."

simple shape such an illustration may have been framed by Jesus when He found His preaching unwelcome in the synagogues, and turned to less " respectable " audiences—people less strict in their legal observance—not disdaining publicans and sinners as His disciples. But the original material has almost disappeared beneath the embroidery added in our Gospels, where the parable has become an explicit prediction of the gentile mission, a development which Jesus never contemplated.

Again we observe that departure from the probabilities, which is so unlike the manner of Jesus in His genuine parables. How could it be, *e.g.*, if all the poor and maimed and blind and lame had come to the supper, that there was still room in the house (Luke xiv. 22) ? Jesus never sacrifices considerations of common sense like this ; the stories which bear His authentic impress are stories we can believe to have happened. In Matthew the process of elaboration is carried still further, and the parable becomes once more frankly an allegory. The giver of the feast is no longer, as in Luke, a private individual, but a king, *i.e.*, God ; the supper becomes his son's wedding-feast, *i.e.*, the Messianic Banquet, which is to inaugurate the Kingdom of God—*cf.* Rev. xix. 9, " Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." The first invitation is that which was given through the prophets, the second was issued through the apostles, both being declined by the invited guests, viz., the Jews. There follows the quite improbable feature, reminiscent of the story of the Wicked Husbandmen, that the persons invited actually ill-treat and kill the messengers who called them to the feast ; this could only have been added after such experiences as befell the apostles at the hand of the Jews, when they were imprisoned and beaten (Acts v. 18, 40), persecuted (*ib.* viii. 1), and at least one of them, James the brother of John, had been put to death (*ib.* xii. 2). Equally on the lines of the allegory of the Wicked Husbandmen is the statement, " But the king was wroth ; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city "—a retrospective prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem.

Very remarkable, finally, and as unauthentic as the rest, but peculiar to Matthew, is the king's question to one of these guests gathered from the highways, " Friend, how camest thou hither not having a wedding garment ? " and the fate which befalls that unhappy individual, who is cast out into the outer darkness. The radiant sanity of Jesus could never have invented such a detail ; for when a wealthy man chooses to fill his house with tramps

and beggars, he cannot expect them to be dressed like his social equals attending a ceremonial function. The truth is that this appendix represents the revulsion with which a Jewish-Christian like Matthew contemplated the very mixed company of gentile converts: they have all been called, but there will be, he suggests, some process of discrimination—a weeding-out, on moral grounds, as in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt. xiii. 24–30); as in that of the Drag-net (*ib.* 47–50), where the bad fish are separated from the good, and cast away; as in that of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (*ib.* xxv. 1–13), and that of the Sheep and the Goats (*ib.* xxv. 31–46). All these parables of discrimination and rejection belong to Matthew alone, and may be set down to his apprehensions with regard to the immense influx of gentiles, often of very dubious moral antecedents. The saying, "Many are called, but few chosen," may be a variant of 2 Esdras viii. 3, "There be many created, but few shall be saved."

We shall assume, then, that the members of the Sanhedrin, deeply incensed by the parable of the Two Sons and its application to them, retired without having received an answer to their question as to the authority by which Jesus had created the previous day's scene; unquestionably they would have liked to arrest Him then and there, but their animosity was curbed by their fear of the people, who had been favourably impressed by the Lord's references to John. For the moment officialdom was baffled, but the sense of their frustration, and their resentment under the public affront which had been offered to them, rendered them the more dangerous. To use open force against Jesus was to risk developments for which they felt no inclination; the better way, from their point of view, was to try and involve Him in conflict with the Roman authorities, and to let the latter deal with Him, and bear the odium of His removal. If He could be provoked into some utterance capable of being construed as disloyalty, a hint to the Governor would suffice; and such a manœuvre, they may have argued, should not prove impossible of execution against one who spoke of the Kingdom of God as at hand, and who must therefore ardently detest the Roman overlordship.

Now when in the following sections we find that one question is propounded to Jesus by the Pharisees, another by the Sadducees, and yet a third by a representative of the scribes, we cannot help feeling that Mark and Matthew wish to produce the

impression that each section of Judaism in turn had an encounter with the Lord on one set occasion, and that He emerged victorious from every one. The arrangement strikes one as somewhat artificial, over-symmetrical. And when the Evangelists further state that the Pharisees, in their attempt to ensnare Jesus, were joined by the Herodians, so improbable an alliance must needs provoke doubt;[1] for the Pharisees, unlike the priestly party, the Sadducees, had been vehemently opposed to Herod, and were not at all likely to make common cause with the adherents of his fallen dynasty. What the Sanhedrin aimed at was to entrap Jesus by means of a question which He could not evade, and which, under the guise of being prompted by religious zeal, was to make Him commit Himself with fatal effect against the Roman government. With unctuous and rather clumsy flatteries of His frankness and fearlessness the emissaries of the Council (Mark xii. 13–17; Matt. xxii. 15–22; Luke xx. 20–26) ask the Nazarene rabbi's opinion on a problem which was certainly a burning one in Judæa, viz., the payment of "tribute to Cæsar," *i.e.*, of taxes to the Imperial authorities. The "tribute" was probably the poll-tax levied on provincials, which was extremely unpopular among the Jews, since it brought the loss of their former independence very emphatically home to them; when it was first levied by Quirinius, the result had been insurrection and bloodshed (Acts v. 37). What the questioners hoped to effect—what their compliments were aimed at—was to induce Jesus to make an uncompromising statement advising non-payment of the obnoxious impost. He could hardly, they thought, fail to deliver Himself in that sense, for His fervent preaching of the Kingdom seemed to proclaim Him a hater of the foreign yoke. All that was necessary was to report His utterance to Pilate, who would have Him arrested and executed as a rebel forthwith; if on the other hand He pronounced, unexpectedly, in favour of payment, such a public pronouncement would cost Him dearly in popular support, and convey the impression that He was at heart a pro-Roman, a traitor to His people, who would no further protect Him against the religious authorities.

We are bound to say that it seems to us extremely doubtful that it was the Pharisees who executed this stratagem. For the

[1] The case for such a combination is not strengthened by Mark's much earlier statement that the Pharisees with the Herodians took counsel against Jesus, how they might destroy Him, after He had healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on a Sabbath. There might be Herodians in Roman Judæa, as there are Bonapartists in Republican France, but there could be no such party in a country actually ruled by Herod Antipas.

Pharisees hated the Romans precisely because they regarded the *census* as unlawful, and extremists among their number refused to pay it; that they should have plotted to provoke Jesus into making a declaration which supported their contention, with a view of denouncing a sympathizer to the common enemy, is not so much to credit them with Machiavellianism as to suspect them of insanity. Popular Christian tradition no doubt took pleasure in the thought that all the Jewish sects and parties were "in a tale" against Jesus, all tried to tempt Him, and all were defeated; but it seems more inherently credible that this plot emanated from the anti-nationalist, pro-foreign Sadducean party, and Luke seems to be better advised than Mark and Matthew in substituting for "Pharisees and Herodians," "spies, which feigned themselves to be righteous," sent by the scribes and the *chief priests*, the latter no doubt Sadducees.

The dilemma was in any case very astutely contrived, since Jesus' answer, whether yes or no, must prove damaging to Him; that He was at once aware of the hostile intentions of these *soi-disant* inquiring spirits, is evident from His indignant and yet contemptuous question, "Why tempt ye Me?" The incident serves to bring out the rapidity and acuteness of the Lord's thought; for in asking His opponents to produce and show Him a denarius, the silver coin which was issued by the Roman Imperial mint, and was current in all parts of the Empire, He turned the tables upon them in a most unexpected manner. That coin bore the image of the Emperor, and hence, if these "righteous ones" were so much in earnest about observing the Mosaic Law, they had no business to handle such money at all, far less to use it day by day. But as it happened, and as He very well knew, their strictness did not extend so far; and in making them confess that the image and superscription on the coin were those of Cæsar, Jesus made them convict themselves *coram publico* of not being nearly so scrupulous as they pretended to be. If they could regularly use the Roman currency, then their reluctance to pay the Roman tax was inconsistent with their professions, to say the least. Moreover, in the ancient world it was thought that the image of the sovereign on a coin stamped it as his personal property: if, then, the denarius was Cæsar's, what objection could there be to giving him what was his own? To render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's was thus the decision of sanctified common sense; but the main point in the Lord's reply is the clause which completes it—"and unto God the things that are God's"—for His meaning is that the fulfilment

of these trivial duties towards the civil government was perfectly compatible with the fulfilment of the far more important duties towards God—that the one did not exclude or excuse from the other.

In deciding as He did, it must not be thought that Jesus countenanced or temporized with the Roman administration, which was no doubt in His eyes, as in the eyes of every good Jew, an anomaly ; but just because that anomaly was in any case to end quite shortly—just because the Reign of God was at hand—it was absurd to make a fuss over such a trifle, worse than absurd to offer a futile resistance. The more confidently the Council's spies had expected an answer which would have enabled them to denounce Jesus to Pilate, the more ruefully they withdrew, their main purpose unaccomplished, from an encounter in which they had under-estimated His quickness, resource, and power of penetration. And yet their calculations were probably justified to this extent, that by acquiescing in a hated tax Jesus must have shaken, if not forfeited, the confidence of not a few among the people ; they would suspect Him of being lax in the national cause, ready to compromise with the heathen world-power, an impression which His enemies would skilfully spread and strengthen. Almost one would say, *incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim.*

That the question concerning the lawfulness or otherwise of paying the tribute to Cæsar was propounded to Jesus on the day and under the circumstances related in the Gospels, does not seem open to doubt ; can we say the same concerning the episode which immediately follows it (Mark xii. 18–27 ; Matt. xxii. 23–33 ; Luke xx. 27–39), viz., the question of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection ? We know Mark's habit of combining, or relating consecutively, incidents and sayings having some characteristic in common, showing Jesus in a certain light, or in relation to certain classes, His attitude towards the Law, the Sabbath, the keeping of fasts, etc., etc. ; the Evangelist groups such narratives together, not because they happened successively, in that particular order, but because they treat of related subjects. Thus it is in itself far from improbable that, having shown Jesus victorious in steering clear of a snare which according to the tradition had been laid for Him by the Pharisees, he now records a companion incident in which the Sadducees figure as the attacking and defeated party : we need not question that such an incident actually took place, and yet feel less than

certain that the *two* incidents happened on one and the same day (Matt. xxii. 23).

The fact is that the anecdote about the Sadducees strikes one as less appropriate to the occasion than the one which precedes it. The question concerning the tribute was a trap, set with deadly intention; that concerning the resurrection, and the very manner in which it is propounded by the Sadducees, has the air of leisurely rabbinical disputation, it is in the vein of that scholastic ingenuity in which rabbinism delighted, but which seems alien to the atmosphere of combat which filled these fateful days. We are told that these men came to Jesus with a problem based on the old law (Deut. xxv. 5, 6) which commanded that if a man died childless, his brother should marry the widow; given, then, the case of seven brothers, all married under the provisions of this law to the same woman, whose wife should she be if there were a resurrection? The case so formulated is meant to be the *reductio ad absurdum* of the belief in a life to come: if there were such a life, the questioners imply, Moses would not have framed a law involving complications of this kind in the other world; but since he did frame this statute, it is evident (the Sadducees argue) that the future life is a fiction.

In introducing the Sadducees simply as people who did not believe in the resurrection, as though that were their principal characteristic, the Evangelists convey an inaccurate impression. As a matter of plain fact, the Sadducees were not a theological sect, but a political party, small in numbers but influential, and recruited largely from the priestly nobility. They were the ruling group in the Sanhedrin; it is interesting to note that Josephus describes them as "cruel beyond the rest of the Jews in passing judgment," in contradistinction to the Pharisees. As ecclesiastical politicians they believed in keeping on good terms with Rome, and were by no means unfavourable to Hellenic culture; they were, in short, a worldly, conservative faction, negative in outlook, intent on preserving their prerogatives, their social status, and the income from the higher priestly offices; and with the destruction of the Temple they disappeared completely, leaving not a trace of their existence behind.

Just because, however, the Sadducees' policy aimed at a good understanding with the secular power, they had no sympathy with the national aspirations after the Kingdom of God, which meant the overthrow of the Roman dominion; in their cool and sensible way they disbelieved in such a supernatural event, and accordingly discouraged the eschatological enthusiasms

which led only to futile revolts, and endangered the only thing they cared about, the *status quo*. For this reason they were really far more radically opposed to Jesus than the Pharisees; with the latter, in spite of grave divergences in regard to the Law, Jesus had a point of contact in their common hope of the approaching Kingdom, nor is it without significance that while we read again and again of Jesus as the guest in the house of some Pharisee or other, the Gospels contain no notice of His ever being offered hospitality by a Sadducee. Now the advent of the Kingdom of God was closely associated in the popular mind with the resurrection of the dead, which according to Dan. xii. 2 was to accompany the former event; and the Sadducees, disbelieving in the one, disbelieved in the other also. Unquestionably they were out of sympathy with all the apocalyptic hopes that were characteristic of later Judaism but had no warrant in the Torah; but in facing Jesus with a problem which seemed to cast ridicule on the idea of a future life, what they really sought to discredit was the expectation of the Kingdom which was so intimately linked with it. The masses believed unquestioningly in the life to come; perhaps, if the Sadducees' question was asked in the presence of a concourse of listeners, it was with the hope that in embarrassing Jesus they might also dislodge some of the common people's superstitions.

In His reply, the Lord is represented as seeking to prove two things—in the first place, that the doctrine of a future life does not lead to the complications which His questioners suppose to follow from it; and in the second, that the Law, *i.e.*, the Pentateuch, does not disavow belief in immortality. He begins by telling the Sadducees that their query shows them to be ignorant both of the scriptures, and of the power of God; that in the resurrection there is no marrying or giving in marriage, but that those who are found worthy to attain to that world (Luke xx. 35) will be as the angels. This answer throws an interesting sidelight upon what in our Lord's time was passing current as "scripture," and could be so appealed to; for it is in the apocalyptic Book of Enoch (xv. 7) that we read about the angels "for whom God has created no wives." The deeper thought of Jesus is, of course, that in the world to come the relations of this earthly life will not be simply resumed, but that those who partake of that life will enter upon a higher and more spiritual phase of existence. In an eternal world, where there are neither births nor deaths, there will be no occasion for the perpetuation of an institution designed to balance deaths by births. The

supposed problem, therefore, as to whose wife in the resurrection a woman will be who has had more than one husband on earth, does not arise, and the implied objection to the doctrine of a future life falls to the ground.

The second part of the answer—that which endeavours to show that the Law, so far from being silent on such a doctrine, actually teaches it—does not, it must be confessed, carry the same conviction to us; and if Jesus really made use of the argument attributed to Him, it was merely a case of beating a casuist with his own weapons. The Sadducees are reminded of the story of the Burning Bush, where Yahveh speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob (Exod. iii. 15), and the inference is drawn that if He was such, the patriarchs must be alive, and not dead, seeing that God is the God of the living. That is, assuredly, not the plain sense which the writer of those words attached to them; what he meant was that the same God who had guided and protected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would guide and protect their descendants. The idea of Israel's forbears being alive is not so much as hinted at, and the alleged meaning deduced from the Old Testament phrase is simply a *jeu d'esprit* in the approved style of rabbinism—quite adequate and legitimate as a repartee in a bout of dialectics, but not what one would call a sound interpretation of the text.

There is, however, a deeper question than one of correct exegesis involved in the Lord's use of this ancient passage: He expresses the intuitive feeling of the awakened soul of man that the love of God, once experienced, is the sufficient guarantee of the soul's survival—the Divine affection will preserve its objects, will not deprive itself of them by allowing them to pass into the blank of annihilation; it is the magnificent assurance which finds utterance in the words of the prophet: "Art not *Thou* from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die" (Hab. i. 12). What God loves, He loves to all eternity; He is the God of the living, for all live unto Him.

Jesus' answer to the Sadducees—who, we are given to understand, attempt no rejoinder—opens up the question of His own conception of the afterworld, which seems to have differed, at any rate at times, from that most generally current in Judaism. According to the dominant Jewish belief the soul passed at death into the shadowland of Hades, waiting there for the day of resurrection, when it would rise from its subterranean dwelling-place, and, on being reunited with its body, present itself for judgment, to pass either into everlasting life or "to shame and

everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). But in the view of Jesus the patriarchs, and indeed all the departed servants of God, are fully alive without having passed through such an intermediate state. Similarly, in the parable of Lazarus, we find that the beggar passes straightway into Abraham's bosom, while the rich man awakes in a state of fiery anguish.[1] Without treating what is picture-language as if it were statement of literal fact, one seems justified in concluding that Jesus believed that men would come in for the consequences of their acts in this life immediately after death, without an intervening period prior to the general resurrection and final judgment. On the other hand, the Discourse on the Last Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31–46) would seem to show that He shared the more popular view, the gathering of all mankind before the throne of the Supreme Judge on the last day, and their separation into saved and lost. We probably wrong Him in seeking for any dogmatic fixity on such a subject in His mind; it is more likely that there were fluctuations in the way in which He presented the after-life to Himself and to others, but, now and again at least, He appears to have rejected the idea of an intermediate state, which prevailed in His age, in favour of life as continuous, uninterrupted by the incident of bodily death.

In Luke's Gospel the incident of the Sadducees' question and the Lord's reply is brought to a close by the statement that certain of the scribes—*i.e.*, in all probability Pharisees, who would be delighted to see their opponents so effectively disposed of—commended Jesus for having answered those sceptics so well, and the added observation, "They durst not any more ask Him any question." But in Matthew this same observation occurs at a later stage, after Jesus has dealt with a different problem (Matt. xxii. 46), and in Mark we find it again, but at the conclusion of yet another episode. Evidently this formula was part of the early tradition, but its introduction by each of the Synoptists in a different place emphasizes the uncertainty which surrounds the recollections of even those last days. Thus in Mark's and Matthew's Gospels, but not in Luke's, the victorious encounters with Pharisees and Sadducees are followed by a third and crowning incident, in which a scribe asks Jesus which is the first or great commandment in the Law (Mark xii. 28–34; Matt. xxii. 34–40).

[1] This may possibly be the Third Evangelist's, rather than the Lord's, view of the matter; *cf.* the apocryphal saying, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

Matthew, but not Mark, represents this as yet another attempt of the Pharisees to "tempt" Jesus, after He had put the Sadducees to silence; there is, however, no evidence of such a motive on the part of the scribe, who appears to have acted in all good faith. Such a question could not, in the nature of things, have been asked as a trap; every Jew knew which was the "first" and therefore the "great" commandment, viz., that which had become the standard formula of Israel's faith; at most the scribe can have intended to ascertain whether this reputedly heterodox rabbi, who had just dealt so admirably with the Sadducees, ranged himself with Judaism in regard to the fundamentals of the faith. Without a moment's hesitation Jesus names as the first of all duties that love of God which the Mosaic code (Deut. vi. 4, 5) places in the forefront, the commandment which every Israelite repeated daily at morning and evening prayer, which was written on the miniature roll attached to the phylacteries he wore at worship, and that which he fastened to the door-post of his house. There was nothing surprising about this reply; at most it removed any doubt or uncertainty as to the Speaker's position. What was quite unexpected, a flash of religious genius, was the second part of the Lord's answer, where of His own accord He adds to this first commandment—which everybody recognized, at least in theory—a second, as "like unto it," *i.e.*, of equal authority, namely that which directs the individual to love his neighbour like himself (Lev. xix. 18); on these two, He declares, hang all the Law and the Prophets—which is to say that in comparison with these all the rest of the legislation is but of minor importance. In Mark's version, but not in Matthew's, the scribe expresses his assent in the most explicit fashion, not merely repeating the quotations from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, but adding, in the language of 1 Sam. xv. 22, that the observance of these commandments is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices; and the Evangelist rounds off the episode by the statement that Jesus commended the scribe as not far from the Kingdom of God, and—somewhat unexpectedly under the circumstances—that no man after that durst ask Him any question, a phrase more likely to have followed upon the Lord's answer to the Sadducees, where Luke places it.

None of the sayings of Jesus bears the impress of His mind more unmistakably than that in which he couples the duty of love to God with that of loving one's neighbour as one's self.

Both commandments were as old as the Old Testament; it was their combination, the express assertion that the second was on an equality with the first, which stamped them as the Master's own, and made them the foundation of His religion. But we have to inquire why this episode is not recorded by Luke, who had Mark's Gospel before him just as Matthew had; and the answer to this inquiry is that Luke had already related a very similar—yet in important respects dissimilar—episode in an earlier section of his Gospel, viz., as forming part of the Samaritan ministry. There we read (Luke x. 25–28) that a certain lawyer approached Jesus with the question what he must do to inherit eternal life, and that on Jesus asking him, "What is written in the Law?" he, the lawyer, of his own accord quoted the two commandments, viz., to love God with heart and soul and strength and mind, and one's neighbour as oneself; and that Jesus approved of the answer, bidding the lawyer to fulfil these duties, and he should live. Evidently this is merely a different version of the story told by Mark and Matthew, and the not unimportant question arises which has the better right to be regarded as the original one—the Marcan, where Jesus enunciates the two great commandments, or the Lucan, where the lawyer does so.

The answer seems to be dictated by the extreme improbability that a questioner who had just asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, on being challenged simply to say what was written "in the Law," would immediately and out of his own inspiration have quoted just these two injunctions, singling them out from the infinite multitude of statutes written in the same code. A man capable of such insight would not have felt the need to ask another what he must do to ensure his salvation. We conclude, therefore, that Luke or his source mistakenly credited the lawyer with originating a truth which he merely repeated, as Mark represents him, after hearing it from Jesus, and that it was our Lord who joined the love of God and the love of man together in a union which none may put asunder.

It is Luke, on the other hand, who preserves for us the important sequel of the incident. The lawyer asks Jesus for a further definition of the term "neighbour," which in the strict interpretation meant simply "fellow-Jew." Jesus does not hesitate to give the desired decision, not in the form, however, which the lawyer would have expected, but in that of the story of the merciful Samaritan, who proved neighbour to a man of hostile race in his evil plight, when the professional religionists of his

own nation, the priest and the scribe, had left him to his fate. It may be the case, though we are not convinced by Mr. Montefiore's argument,[1] that this story is an adaptation of an older Jewish apologue, the personages of which were a priest, a Levite, and a simple Israelite; but even if it were so, the whole point would lie in Jesus substituting for the latter the figure of a Samaritan, a member of about the best-hated nationality with which the Jew came into contact, and who yet demonstrated by his practical sympathy and generous help that he was a neighbour indeed. Our neighbour, Jesus teaches, is he to whomsoever we are able to render unselfish service; and the duty of helpfulness is limited only by the opportunity of showing it.

Did this dialogue take place where Luke records it, or where we read it in the other Synoptics? Luke is certainly at fault as regards the locality, for there were no Jewish scribes in Samaria, yet the very fact that he can introduce the incident in quite a different setting from the one given to it by Mark sets us wondering whether the latter is necessarily accurate. The Evangelists probably came upon this anecdote as a detached and floating fragment, which they respectively inserted where it seemed to them to fit in best or with most appropriateness. Certainly, from that point of view, this colloquy between the Master and an all-but disciple, marked by mutual appreciation and entire harmony of outlook, coming after the sharp disputes with Pharisees and Sadducees, strikes a singularly impressive and satisfying final chord. Whether that was indeed the course of the day's doings, or to what extent the arrangement of these fragments by our writers corresponds to the historical sequence, we are almost as little able to affirm as we are to supplement from our imagination all that tradition has left unrecorded of the happenings of that momentous Week.

In sum, another day's teaching in the Temple, disputes, parables, conversations, till nightfall, but apparently no nearer an advance to the desired consummation, which yet was so swiftly approaching. . . .

"*And they went every man unto his own house: but Jesus went unto the mount of Olives*" (John vii. 53).

[1] The *Synoptic Gospels*, ii. 935–937.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEEPENING SHADOWS

In passing from Mark xii. 34 to *ib.* verse 35, and again from Luke xx. 40 to *ib.* verse 41, the reader cannot but be sensible of an abrupt transition, or want of transition. For whereas the former verse in each Gospel suggests the end of a section, the end of a day's doings, the latter opens the relation of several other anecdotes, all apparently still belonging to the same day as those which have immediately preceded. Now if Mark xi. 20–xiv. 11 and Luke xx. 1–xxi. 38 are meant to record the events of one day, that day, crowded with so many memories, would be followed by one which is almost a blank, telling us nothing about the Lord's activities except His giving instructions for the last meal, and the holding of that meal itself, followed by His arrest. Thus the Wednesday of continual and frequently stormy movement would have been followed by a Thursday of dead calm, complete inaction ; *a priori* it seems more likely that the Evangelists, little as they were concerned with details of chronology, should have intended a more equal distribution of their materials, allocating the episodes of Mark xi. 20–xii. 34 ; Luke xx. 1–40 to one day, and those of Mark xii. 35–xiv. 11 ; Luke xx. 41–xxi. 38 to the next.

So marked is the want of connection between these two sections in our second and third Gospels, as to suggest the possibility that what strikes us as the gap between them had been originally bridged, but that the bridge had for some reason at a later time disappeared. Now there happens to be in existence a fragment which, while it is quite out of place in its present context, viz., in the Fourth Gospel, has unmistakably strayed into the latter from some Synoptic setting. We are, of course, referring to the verses John vii. 53–viii. 11. Supposing we had read in Luke, after xxii. 40, " They durst not any more ask Him any question " ; " And they went every man unto his own house : but Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the Temple "—we should have recognized such a transition as perfectly natural, indicating the end of one day, and

the beginning of the next. Have we sufficient ground for thinking that this was indeed the original order in which the Synoptists related the tradition of events in Jerusalem, but that subsequently these verses were eliminated from their context, and ultimately found their way into another, where they show up against their environment like a foreign substance?

That the episode of the Woman taken in Adultery is an interpolation in the Fourth Gospel is certain. It is not found in the most ancient Greek MSS., nor in many of the ancient versions; the Greek Fathers either did not know it, or did not regard it as authentic; it is Johannine neither in thought, style, nor vocabulary. The latter test alone would be decisive. This is the only passage in the Fourth Gospel where we find any mention of the mount of Olives, or any reference to scribes, or the use of the phrase "scribes and Pharisees," all familiar in the Synoptics. An expression like πορεύεσθαι εἰς (viii. 1) while often used in the first three Gospels, does not occur in the Fourth except in this one instance. The term λαός (viii. 2) for "the people" is foreign to the Fourth Evangelist, who uses ὄχλος instead; πᾶς ὁ λαός (*ib.*), "all the people," occurs frequently in Luke, but never in the Fourth Gospel. The whole sentence, "And early in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came unto Him" recalls Luke xxi. 38, "And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple." Lucan, too, but not Johannine, is the expression, καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν, *cf.* Luke v. 3, and the word ὄρθρου for "early in the morning," where the Fourth Evangelist uses πρωΐ or πρωΐας.

And, like so much of its language, the tone and temper of this anecdote are distinctly Lucan; the well-known characteristics of the Third Gospel are there—its tenderness towards sinners, its compassion on the social outcast, its sympathy with women; indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that, in the form in which we read it in the Fourth Gospel, this narrative recalls no New Testament author so much as the sensitive artist who drew for us that other picture of the pitying Saviour pronouncing His pardon, to the scandal of his Pharisee host, on another woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 36–50).[1]

We incline accordingly to the view that the Synoptists originally opened their account of the events of the Thursday of Passion Week by relating a tradition which attributed to the enemies of Jesus yet another attempt to entrap Him by asking Him whether He agreed with the Mosaic law in regard to the punishment for

[1] See Note D, on p. 362.

adultery, and went on to record yet another victory of the Lord over those who had come to tempt Him. If this episode was erased from the first three Gospels, the reason is not far to seek; it was doubtless deemed a somewhat extreme instance of leniency, which in practice might be held to be indistinguishable from moral laxity and to condone misconduct.

But to regard this story as Synoptic in origin is not to pronounce it historic in character. That it is told with consummate art, with a wealth of graphic touches, no more proves it to be fact than the same qualities prove the story of the raising of Lazarus to be history. If any purpose were to be served by a surmise, which in the nature of the case must be unverifiable, one might hazard the guess that the case of a woman taken in adultery was submitted to Jesus in the abstract (like that of the woman who married seven brothers), and that Jesus in reply raised the counter-query whether His questioners were so free from stain themselves that they could profitably debate on the punishment to be meted out to an erring fellow-mortal. Such a question and answer might easily give rise to the concrete form in which the anecdote now meets us, and in which it is frankly incredible. We might believe that a group of scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus with some purely academic, prepared query as to what ought to be done with a sinner caught *in flagrante delicto*, where the Law of Moses decreed death—a penalty which under existing conditions the Roman authorities alone had the power to inflict (John xviii. 31); we cannot believe that such an actual case had just conveniently occurred, and that the scribes and Pharisees haled the culprit—or, rather, one of the culprits, for no mention is made of her partner in sin, on whom the Law pronounced the same penalty—before Jesus. But assuming it had happened so, and that they had so consulted Him; assuming further that these people were qualified to "condemn" her, *i.e.*, to denounce her in the capacity of witnesses, before the tribunal—a most unlikely supposition—we cannot believe that these experts in the Law would have showed themselves so ignorant of the authority which they invoked as to misquote it, urging that Moses had commanded that such as this woman should be stoned, whereas that form of punishment applied only to a betrothed virgin, under certain stated circumstances (Deut. xxii. 23, 24). But this reference to the penalty of stoning, we presently find, is introduced only to prepare the way for the rejoinder, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." All that follows

is on the same level of credibility : the alleged effect of the Lord's rejoinder on the accusers who silently, shamefacedly, melt away, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last, while Jesus sits with bowed head, writing on the ground ; His question to the woman when they have all gone, " Where are they ? did no man condemn thee ? "—and on her answering, " No man," His final pronouncement, " Neither do I condemn thee : go thy way ; from henceforth sin no more."

This episode, as related, is not history, but romance, with a flavour of sentimentality very different from the sanely ethical outlook of the Jesus of history. So intent is the writer on the one thing which matters to him—guilt escaping the consequences of guilt—that we are not even told that the woman was penitent. If the words attributed to Jesus—" He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her "—mean that none but the sinless had a right to condemn sin, that is a principle which would confer impunity on all wrongdoing : it is quite impossible to credit our Lord with a pronouncement amounting to the abrogation of all moral judgment. Equally impossible is it to imagine that Jesus could have forgotten that in the case in question there was a deeply-wronged third party, the adulteress's husband, who might well have been aghast at the leniency which refused to condemn so shocking an act of betrayal.

The early Church, face to face with practical problems, had no choice but to expunge this particular tradition, which could not but prove a source of embarrassment. If the enemies of the new faith could say that its Founder had declined to censure a particularly flagrant offence against purity, they would next spread the slander that the Christians were an immoral sect, whose tenets condoned adultery : the wisest plan was to suppress an episode which lent itself to such an unwelcome—but far from unlikely—interpretation.

It is a strange accident which in the end, after it had been removed from its original setting in the Synoptics, consigned one of the most questionable incidents of the evangelical tradition to a place in the least historical of our four Gospels, whence we may easily re-transfer it, thus restoring the lost " bridge " between the events of Wednesday and Thursday in the week preceding the Passover in A.D. 30.

Thursday morning, then, found Jesus and His disciples once more in the Temple. It must not be thought that the Lord's victories over His opponents the day before had greatly affected

the position of affairs. For one thing, it is extremely doubtful whether these encounters—of which *we* know because the disciples were present—became very widely known at the time beyond the circle of those who witnessed them—a comparatively small section of the public. Jerusalem was preparing for a great religious festival, which attracted many scores of thousands of visitors; for these crowds and for the inhabitants of the city—difficult as it is for us to realize this—Jesus was decidedly not the centre of attraction. He had indeed, by His manner of countering the Sanhedrin's question as to His authority, and by seemingly associating His cause with that of the Baptist, created such a temporary impression on those who had heard Him as made the religious officials shrink from a public arrest which might have provoked disorder; but, from the disciples' point of view, He was no nearer being accepted as the Messiah, and from His own, He was no nearer attaining His object, the death which must precede His return. It looked as if the joyful entry into the capital, the scene at the Temple fair, the disputes with Pharisees and Sadducees, had been so many false starts, leading nowhither; and Judas may not have been the only one of the inner circle who, seeing the fulfilment of their confident expectations as far off as ever, felt beset by doubt and misgiving. What if they had been misled after all?

That for our Lord Himself this period must have been intensely trying, can hardly be questioned; still, after two days of disappointment, He returned to the Temple on the third, His mere presence once more a defiance to the Sanhedrin. Moreover, in that environment, with so much simmering religious excitement, which might at any moment boil over, there was still the possibility of His meeting with the attainment of His desire. That His nearest should be "offended in Him"—that their very mien indicated bewilderment, impatience, depression—added to His burden, but had to be borne; presently, when He returned as the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, it would all become clear to them.

Among the fragments which the Synoptists assign to this penultimate period, the first in order of narration is one which represents our Lord as discussing the popular idea of the Messiah's descent. The scribes maintained that the Messiah was to be a descendant of David; this, indeed, was plainly foretold by the ancient prophets, Isa. xi. 1–9 pointing to the future redeemer-king as a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, while Mic. v. 2 spoke

of him as a native of Bethlehem, David's city. Now Jesus, we read (Mark xii. 35–37 ; Matt. xxii. 41–46 ; Luke xx. 41–44), set Himself to prove the baselessness of the prevailing view, and thus to oppose the authority of the scribes by drawing attention to an utterance which was regarded as of messianic import, viz., Ps. cx., the first verse of which—" Yahveh said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet "—was interpreted as being addressed by David, the supposed author of all the psalms, to the Messiah. Now, that a father should call his son, or an ancestor his descendant, " Lord," ran counter to all Jewish ideas : how, then, asked Jesus, could David have called the Messiah his Lord, if he were his descendant ?

Brief as this episode is—a mere interlude—the difficulties which it presents leap to the eyes. That the 110th Psalm has not David for its author is a comparatively minor matter ; it has indeed been convincingly shown that it was addressed to Simon the Maccabee, after he had been made " leader and high-priest for ever " (1 Macc. xiv. 41) by a decree of the Jewish people in the year 142 B.C., and the first four verses of the psalm form, as a matter of fact, an acrostic on the name of Simeon. The main difficulty is that Jesus explicitly disclaimed Davidic descent for the Messiah : if, then, He held that He was Himself the coming Messiah, how could He have been of the Davidic lineage ? And, *per contra*, if He was a descendant of Israel's great king as well as the destined Messiah, how could He have made this disclaimer ? And even if the words were not spoken by Him, we should still be left with the question how a deliverance imputing to Jesus a denial of the Messiah's—*i.e.*, His—descent from David could have found a place in narratives written at a time when it was already the settled belief of the Christian Church that its Lord was " born of the seed of David according to the flesh " (Rom. i. 3).

It has been suggested that the saying is not a genuine one, but was part of an early Christian apologetic, belonging to the days before the genealogies had been compiled : that when Jews asked, " Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David ? " (John vii. 42), Christians replied by pointing to the 110th Psalm, as showing that on the contrary the Messiah could not be David's son, so that the non-Davidic descent of Jesus did not disprove His Messiahship. Such an argument might have proved useful enough to the early Christians in their controversies with the Jews ; but it is difficult to see how it could have secured a permanent place in the Gospels if the tradition tracing the use of the quotation to the Lord Himself had not been very strong

indeed ; too strong to be dislodged by the growing legends which presently began to connect Him with David as His ancestor, and with Bethlehem as His birthplace.

If, then, this incident is historical, as we conclude it to be, we shall have to ask why He should have launched such a denial of what at that time was a generally accepted belief, almost an axiom. He denied it, in the first place, no doubt, because it was erroneous—because He, who knew Himself to be the destined Messiah, knew also that He was not descended from the stock of Jesse, and He was glad to be able to point to a scripture which seemed to support His inner conviction ; in the second place He was perhaps not sorry to renew His polemic against the official expositors of the scriptures, and to do so by uttering a heresy which would add to their resentment, and might even have provoked an outburst of nationalist fanaticism against Him in a sharp and sanguinary form.

The words, " And the common people heard Him gladly,"[1] with which Mark closes his recital of the incident, are almost ideally inappropriate to the occasion, and have plainly strayed from their proper context—unless we are to assume that they form the opening of the next section rather than the conclusion of this one ; certainly no crowd of Jewish nationalists would have listened with delight to an argument, however cogent, which denied one of their fundamental tenets. Still, there was no outburst of violence ; only, in all probability, a still further waning of popular sympathy with this rabbi, whose latest exploit was to deny emphatically what the prophets as emphatically stated about the Messiah.

But now, *i.e.*, presumably later on the same day, Jesus gathered all His power together for a supreme effort which was to achieve the one aim He had in view—that scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees of which Mark (xii. 38–40) gives us only a meagre extract, whereas Matthew (chap. xxiii.) and Luke (xi. 39–52, xx. 45–47) have drawn far more copiously on the document " Q." The First and Third Evangelist use their material each in his own way, Matthew working it up into a great diatribe, while Luke distributes it between Jerusalem and the Samaritan ministry, where, of course, it has no *raison d'être*. The indictment as we read it in Matthew is a literary composition, with carefully studied effects, such as the sevenfold " woe " pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees, and we shall not assume that it was

[1] Better, " Now the mass of the people listened with delight to him " (Moffatt).

necessarily delivered in precisely that form ; but that it faithfully represents the main contents of the tremendous philippic which Jesus hurled at His opponents is hardly open to doubt.

Vanity, hypocrisy, and greed—these are the main charges which our Lord brings against the legalists of His day, against the entire class of the scribes, the entire order of the Pharisees ; they love to make a display of their long robes, their broad phylacteries, the wide borders of their garments ; they love the chief places at feasts and in the synagogues, respectful salutations from the crowd, and to be addressed by the title of rabbi. They are accused of masking their greed under the cloak of religion, of eating up the substance of pious widows who employ them as their spiritual directors, and whom they exploit while professing to offer " effectual prayers " (*cf.* James v. 16–18) on their clients' behalf. They are taunted with their scrupulous observance of the mechanical routine of religion, giving tithe of herbs and vegetables, whilst neglecting the moral law ; they delight in piling up burdensome regulations for their fellows to observe, and refuse to ease their load in the slightest degree. They multiply oaths, and at the same time devise dishonest loopholes and dispensations from the fulfilment of solemn vows. They are eager to make proselytes, but those whom they convert to their way of thinking become worse instead of better men. They neither enter the Kingdom themselves, nor allow others to do so. They attach great importance to the ritual cleanness of the vessels from which they eat and drink, but the contents of cup and platter may be the gains of robbery for all they care. They are compared to carefully kept sepulchres, whose goodly outside covers putrescence. They build the tombs of the prophets, professing respect for them, yet they would assuredly kill any prophet who made His appearance in their own day. Finally, with every opprobrious term calculated to stir them to a very fury of anger, they are deliberately challenged to fill up the measure of their fathers, and show themselves partakers in the blood of the prophets, viz., by doing their worst against the Speaker Himself.

It should require no great powers of reflection to convince us that if every single count in this arraignment was true of some individual scribes and Pharisees, they were manifestly not all of them true of every member of that class and sect. Jesus Himself had spoken of " every scribe who hath been made a disciple unto the Kingdom of heaven " (Matt. xiii. 52) ; Jesus Himself had only the day before declared that a certain scribe

was not far from the Kingdom of God (Mark xii. 34); Jesus Himself had accepted the hospitality of Pharisees more than once. There were without doubt among their number men of genuine piety, of rigorous principle, of unblemished walk, but Jesus was not minded to make allowance for individual cases just then—His paramount purpose was to force on the crisis which still kept tarrying. To understand His unmeasured onslaught, those terrible, merciless strokes, with their passion and irony, we have to remember that *these were the words of a Man who meant to die.*

This last attempt to secure His object was successful; there is no doubt that this attack on the scribes and Pharisees sealed His doom.

Whether accidental or designed, the contrast between this stormy episode and the little idyll placed next to it by Mark and Luke, the story of the Widow's Mite (Mark xii. 41–44; Luke xxi. 1–4), is singularly effective and refreshing; it has been happily described as being "like a rose amid a field of thistles." We are told that Jesus, sitting over against the Treasury—*i.e.*, the thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped mouths in what was called the Women's Court—noticed a number of well-to-do people depositing their offerings, and afterwards a poor widow putting in what from her whole appearance could not be more than the veriest trifle; and that, touched by the spectacle of one who gave out of her evident poverty, He remarked to His disciples that she had "cast in more than they all." It is surely pedantry to object that the Lord could not have observed the amounts contributed by the various donors—that He could not have known which of them were rich, nor that this one was poor and a widow, or that she cast in exactly two mites, the minimum sanctioned by the rabbis! There is after all no particular difficulty in distinguishing rich and poor, nor did it require supernatural insight to surmise that the gifts of the former would be larger than that of an obviously poor woman: let the "two mites" (something less than a farthing), and the statement that this was all the living the widow had, be later embellishments—the lesson drawn from the incident as a whole, the emphasis on the spirit of giving rather than the amount of the gift, is thoroughly characteristic of the great Teacher.

As Jesus and His companions left the Temple precincts, one or other among the latter, we are told (Mark xiii. 1, 2; Matt. xxiv.

1, 2 ; Luke xxi. 5, 6), drew the Master's attention to the imposing proportions of the great sanctuary. Herod's Temple was indeed one of the most marvellous structures of the ancient world, built and furnished with a magnificence which, if it did not spring from religious devotion, gratified the king's taste for noble architecture ; compared with this glorious fane—its courts and cloisters and porticoes, its single blocks of stone, from twelve to fifteen feet in length, for the sub-structure, its whole gorgeous appointments—the Temple of Solomon had no doubt been a modest enough affair. The disciples' eyes rest on the scene with undisguised admiration, which Jesus, a skilled craftsman Himself, could not but share ; but if we are right in thinking that His impassioned denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees had but just been uttered, that the storm in His blood and brains had hardly had time to calm down, we shall understand the mood in which He looked on the receding pile, and announced its forthcoming spoliation and ruin. This was not a novel theme ; prophets like Jeremiah (xxvi. 6, 18) and Micah (iii. 12) had foretold the destruction of the Holy City and its sanctuary as the punishment of the people's sins, and the mind of Jesus was saturated with the spirit and the very language of these prophetic writings. He knew, too, that for predicting such a catastrophe Jeremiah had been accounted worthy of death by the priests of his day, but that the event predicted had come to pass.

Perhaps He had never expressed Himself so definitely on the subject ; the disciples, it seems, were profoundly impressed by the solemn assurance of the Lord's words, and either the Twelve, or the inner circle of three, Peter, James, and John, with whom Mark on this occasion associates Andrew, Peter's brother, asked Him when these things, viz., the destruction of the Temple, should come to pass. In all three Synoptics this question serves to introduce an eschatological discourse of considerable length, which, however—and this is the first thing we notice—does not answer the question as to the date of the Temple's downfall, but quite a different question, *which has not been asked*, viz., as to the time of the coming of the Son of man. That circumstance in itself would suffice to inspire a certain amount of caution ; indeed, to state our conclusion at once, symptoms abound to show that we have in this discourse, taken as a whole, not a deliverance of our Lord's, but in all probability a Jewish or Jewish-Christian broad-sheet—a little apocalypse, foretelling the signs of the end—which circulated in the years immediately preceding the fall of Jerusalem, and was incorporated in the first three Gospels with

certain adaptations, and the addition of a number of genuine sayings of Jesus.

That these chapters are based on what was in the first instance a literary composition, is sufficiently obvious from the exhortation, "Let him that *readeth* understand," which we find in Mark xiii. 14 and Matt. xxiv. 15; by that touch alone the document reveals itself plainly as addressed in the first place, not to actual listeners, but to prospective readers. Such a remark, again, as that "the Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations" (Mark xiii. 10)—viz., ere the end comes—cannot have proceeded from Jesus, who had always presented the consummation as imminent, and who, moreover, in sending out the Twelve had distinctly limited their preaching activity to the Jewish people; that the words are unauthentic is further proved by the persistently unsympathetic attitudes of the apostles, many years after their Master's death, to the idea of a gentile mission.

But this apocalyptic document presents us with more specific indications of its date, which carry us unmistakably to the sixties of the first century. It was firmly believed in Jewish circles that the coming of the Kingdom would be preceded by all manner of tribulations and catastrophes, the so-called birth-pangs (*cf.* Mark xiii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 8) of the Messiah; "these things must needs come to pass" (Mark xiii. 7; Matt. xxiv. 6; Luke xxi. 9) before the commencement of the new Era, and, contrariwise, *when* they came to pass, they would constitute so many sure signs of that Era's nearness. What were "these things"? Wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes, famines, and the appearance of false Messiahs, are enumerated. Now in A.D. 61 there had been a severe earthquake in Phrygia, which had done vast damage to Laodicea, Colosse, and Hierapolis; in A.D. 63 an eruption of Vesuvius had laid half Pompeii in ruins; there had been famines in the reigns both of Claudius and Nero; the Jewish rebellion against Rome, and the war which led to the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, had begun, or was about to begin, in A.D. 66. As for false Messiahs—which are not mentioned in Codex D—the first such pretender to appear was Simon Bar Kochba, A.D. 131; in any case it was assuredly not Jesus, with His expectation of the immediate coming of the Kingdom, who predicted in such detail the events which were thought to herald its advent more than a generation after His death.

Not only does the composition on which the eschatological discourse is founded belong to the seventh decade of the century,

but we can see that it was intended for the inhabitants of Judæa, as distinct from the Jewish nation as a whole. At a certain culminating point in the coming days of tribulation, we read (Mark xiii. 14; Matt. xiv. 15, 16; Luke xxi. 20, 21), the people in Judæa are to flee unto the mountains, as their ancestors had done in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. ii. 28); it is to the Judæans that this exhortation is addressed, not to the followers of the Gospel. Not only so, but the mysterious hint as to what is to be the signal for this flight affords the conclusive proof of the purely Jewish origin of this document. "When ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not," we read in Mark, while Matthew's version is a little more explicit: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, *which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, standing *in the holy place*." This "abomination of desolation," this Appalling Horror, alluded to in Dan. xi. 31, xii. 11, was the setting up of the altar of Zeus in the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. A similar outrage had been attempted by the Emperor Caligula, the successor of Tiberius, who had given commands for his own statue to be erected in the Temple—an act of unspeakable profanation, which, though it had not been carried out, left a feeling of horror in the minds of all Jews. It was evidently feared that when the Romans came to occupy Jerusalem, this dreaded desecration of the Holy Place, which they dared not so much as put into words, would be successfully perpetrated, and at the time when this broadsheet was put forth that culminating disaster seemed already in sight.[1]

Yet terrible as these earthly upheavals would be, they were only the prelude to the far vaster convulsions of nature, darkening sun and moon, falling stars, and all the signs long since foretold by the prophet (Joel ii. 30, 31), as marking the great Day of the Lord, which is here as elsewhere in the Gospels identified with the supernatural appearance of the Son of man with power and glory. The end was drawing close; as the growing leaves of the fig-tree announced the coming of summer, so should these events be the sure indications that "He," *i.e.*, the Son of man, was nigh, even at the doors. The exact moment was known to none save God, not even to the Son Himself, but it would be within the lifetime of the generation to which the message was addressed; and that very uncertainty made it all the more obligatory on one

[1] *Cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, "The man of sin (*sc.* shall) be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God."

and all to be vigilant. The final exhortation to the reader is the impressively brief motto, " Watch."

Taken as a whole, then, this discourse cannot be authentic. What happened was that as year succeeded year after the Lord's death, and the expected Kingdom still tarried, there was naturally considerable perplexity and discouragement among the early community of believers; and under these circumstances this Jewish prediction of the things which must first come to pass, *i.e.*, before the consummation, proved a very welcome explanation of the continued delay; it was combined with genuine sayings of Jesus, the whole attributed to Him and so embodied in the Gospels, where it forms a piece of early apologetic. Evidently it must have been inserted in Mark's narrative, even in its finished form, shortly before A.D. 70, for it contemplates the destruction of Jerusalem as imminent, but still in the future.

In trying to disentangle from this composite structure its authentic elements, we may at any rate feel fairly certain that to the historical question, " When shall these things be? " we have the historical answer in the words, " Of that day and that hour knoweth no one but the Father." These, and these alone, belong to the occasion, and spring directly from the Lord's prediction of the destruction of the Temple, which He and the disciples have just left. The section (Mark xiii. 9*b*–12; Luke xxi. 12*b*–16), which instructs the adherents of the Gospel how to bear themselves before hostile tribunals, and advises them of the coming discord between members of families, even if authentic, simply reproduces material which in Matt. x. 19–21 forms part of the directions given to the Twelve, prior to their mission. Similarly the admonitions to watchfulness, and the parable of the servants intent on their master's return (Mark xiii. 33–37; Matt. xxiv. 42–44), have their parallel in Luke xii. 35–40, and may be genuine. That Jesus may have cast His expectations of the future in the eschatological form familiar to Jewish thought since the days of Joel, must also be admitted as inherently not improbable. But the rest of what is known as the eschatological discourse, and particularly its specific references to the events of the years immediately preceding the fall of Jerusalem, do not belong to the primitive tradition of Christ's sayings, but reflect the conditions prevailing in Judæa during the seventh decade of the first century.

In Matthew's Gospel the eschatological discourse is followed by certain additional material, chiefly of a parabolic or quasi-parabolic character, some of which he and Luke have derived

from "Q," while some has come to Matthew from a separate source. This section (Matt. xxiv. 45–xxv. 46) consists of the parable of the Faithful Servant, that of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, that of the Talents, and the discourse on the Last Judgment, at each of which we must now glance.

The parable beginning, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant?"—Matt. xxiv. 45–51; Luke xii. 41–46—tells us of a master who during his absence has entrusted all his household to a steward, and if he finds on his return that the steward has discharged his duties diligently, will promote him still higher; should the steward, however, presuming on his master's prolonged stay from home, begin to ill-treat his fellow-servants and get into dissolute ways, the master will reappear unexpectedly and inflict summary punishment on him. That is a perfectly simple thought, which the two Evangelists express with none but minor differences of phrasing; the only question is whether we can connect such a thought with the mind of Jesus. For the key-note of this whole parable is sounded in the words, "My lord tarrieth"; and these words express the feeling of the second and third generation of Christians, who saw the time since the Saviour's death lengthening, and the expectation of His return still unfulfilled. This is the feeling frankly alluded to in 2 Pet. iii. 4—"Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." In such an atmosphere of disillusion it would happen that men whose faith had grown dim gave themselves up to lax and worldly lives, and it is to such as these that the parable addresses a warning, almost a menace. We can understand both that such a warning might prove necessary, and that it would quite naturally take the form of such an illustrative story; but it is difficult to think that such an exhortation was framed by Jesus, who anticipated no delay at all, but looked forward to His return, *i.e.*, His resurrection—the two events being originally thought of as identical—in the most immediate future.

Precisely the same considerations apply to the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. xxv. 1–13), which expresses the same idea under a different image. This too is distinctly a parable inspired by the delayed return of the Lord, and intended to warn believers against abandoning hope. Christ is here represented under the figure of the Bridegroom (*cf.* Mark ii. 19, 20 and parallels), who has been celebrating His marriage, viz., with the Church, the Bride of Christ (*cf.* Matt. xxii. 2; Eph. v. 27; Rev.

xix. 7, xxi. 9). Ten maidens wait to light the happy pair home to the marriage chamber, hoping, as a reward for their services, to be invited to share in the last hospitalities. But once more the expected One tarries, and the maidens fall asleep. At midnight, however, the Bridegroom arrives, and five of the maidens, to their chagrin, find that they have no oil in their lamps, while their more provident companions have only enough for their own use ; they hurry off to purchase oil at that unlikely hour, but having obtained their supply, discover that they are now too late to accompany the Bridegroom, who has gone in to the marriage feast, and declines to admit those who were not ready to meet Him when He came. Again, the idea is perfectly plain, and expressed with a good deal of graphic power ; but again, too, such an idea belongs quite obviously to an age which needed to be admonished against losing its alertness in the expectation of the Parousia. Indeed, wherever the delay in the Lord's return is hinted at, we recognize the difficulty and embarrassment of the early Church, not the mind of Christ ; He Himself harboured no thought of such postponements.

Matthew's special interest in this particular topic—the delay in the Lord's expected return—comes out when we compare his parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14–30) with Luke's parable of the Pounds (Luke xix. 12–27). Each is evidently a variant of one original utterance ; but it is only Matthew who once more introduces this note of delay : " Now *after a long time* the lord of these servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them." That touch is absent from Luke's version, and we may feel certain that it is Matthew's own addition to the original. The story itself—it is hardly a parable—illustrating how industry and fidelity are rewarded, while indolence loses even its original endowment, was no doubt devised by Jesus Himself, though the closing sentence, in Matthew's version, " Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth," goes beyond the original intention of this moral apologue, and represents Jesus Himself as the stern and austere Judge, who at His return will decree eternal life and death according to men's desert. Whether it was uttered in Passion Week, where Matthew records it, or when Jesus and His followers were approaching Jerusalem, as Luke tells us, we have no means of knowing.

If, however, the story of the Talents may be confidently assigned to Jesus as its Author, we cannot speak with anything like the same assurance concerning the discourse on the Last

Judgment, which not only rests on the sole attestation of Matthew (Matt. xxv. 31–46), but is *sui generis* in the Gospels. Here we have neither a parable nor an allegory, nor yet a mere statement of fact in the sense of a prophecy to be literally interpreted, as is evident from the designation of the righteous and the wicked as "sheep" and "goats"; it is a pictorial representation of the future, a fresco boldly executed in striking colours, and with an artist's freedom of treatment, evident in the grouping and lighting of the whole composition. The question is, Who was the artist? We are not so much as told that the speaker is Jesus; the discourse commences abruptly, without introduction, describing what will happen when the Son of man comes in His glory, with all the angels, and sits on the judgment throne, to judge all the nations, separating them simply into two groups, the saved and the lost, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. It is to be noticed that while here, as in Matt. xvi. 27, it is the Son of man Himself who pronounces judgment, in Matt. x. 32, 33 He appears merely as the decisive Witness before His Father's tribunal. Obviously, we are dealing with poetic imagery, though it is not at all impossible that Jesus believed that on His return as the Messiah He would be entrusted by God with the supreme judicial function. On the other hand, the discourse as we read it may be the elaboration by a later hand of an original *parable* of judgment, told of a king who meted out rewards and punishments, not according to the homage rendered to himself, but according to the treatment received by the weakest and lowliest of his subjects. What, in any case, we may regard as bearing the stamp of the Lord's own mind—a thought so original that the Christian Church has rarely grasped it—is the priceless core of the discourse, the idea that men will be judged according as they have dealt by their fellows; that every helpful act will be viewed by their Divine Judge as though they had done it to Him, every omission to show kindness and sympathy to the least and lowest as though they had refused it to Him. "Inasmuch as ye did it—inasmuch as ye did it not—ye have done it, or not done it, unto Me": there speaks Jesus, and whether that pronouncement belongs to this particular juncture or not, it forms a most effective close to this section of Matthew's narrative.

But now the sands were running out very fast. Jesus' terrific and, one might say, studiously immoderate denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees had accomplished what neither the scene of disorder in the Temple court, nor the taunt flung at the chief

priests and elders—"The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you"—nor all His other provocative sayings on the preceding days, had been able to effect; it had brought about a sudden hardening of the situation so far as the authorities were concerned, by uniting the Pharisaic with the priestly section of the Sanhedrin in the determination to adopt extreme measures. If the first intention of the authorities had been to wait at least until after the feast, they now resolved to proceed without further delay, and to arrest this dangerous agitator with a maximum of expedition and secrecy. Such descriptions as we have of the chief priests, scribes, and elders meeting in the court of Caiaphas, and consulting together how they might take Jesus with subtlety and kill Him (Mark xiv. 1, 2; Matt. xxvi. 3, 4; Luke xxii. 1, 2), are, of course, merely inferences drawn by tradition from the course which the authorities actually took; what is certain is that in the view of the latter the existing state of affairs had become intolerable, and must be speedily ended. Their difficulty lay not in effecting an arrest—that was easy enough, but did not advance them much; for, being by that time intent on nothing less than the life of Jesus, they still lacked material on which to base a capital charge, especially as any sentence of death they might pronounce had to be formally ratified by the Roman government. Now Pilate would never have passed or confirmed a capital sentence on the ground that a prisoner had denied or defied the authority of the Mosaic ritual, or spoken disrespectfully of the Sanhedrin, or uttered a vain-glorious boast—plainly impossible of execution—to destroy the Temple, or caused an affray in the Temple court, all matters with which the Sanhedrin had power to deal themselves; and nothing short of a death sentence would satisfy the ranks of incensed and at length alarmed officialdom. To make out a case which would compel *Pilate* to find Jesus guilty of death was the urgent problem which now engaged their minds.

We repeat that such a problem could not have existed at all, had Jesus, in entering Jerusalem, with the utmost publicity proclaimed Himself the coming Messiah; in that case it would have sufficed to draw Pilate's attention to an agitation against the Roman government, and that would have been the end of the matter, and the end of Jesus, for the Governor could not have ignored such information, or failed to take official action. That the Sanhedrin did not take this course is in itself sufficient proof that our Lord had not divulged His messianic secret in the manner generally supposed. Out of this *impasse* a way suddenly

offered itself—whether unexpectedly or otherwise, and on whose initiative, we shall never know.

We are dealing with a complex and in many ways very obscure situation, rendered more obscure by the fragmentariness of our data. But we can hardly doubt that the course of events from the time of their arrival in the capital onwards had been severely disappointing to the disciples. They had unquestionably expected that their Master would then and there take steps to establish the Kingdom of God ; and when the enthusiastic scenes which had accompanied His entry into the Holy City led to nothing beyond themselves, when the popular cheers died away, and Jesus, after looking round the Temple precincts, quietly returned to Bethany for the night, the effect must have been that of an anti-climax. In the scene next morning, the attack on the sellers and money-changers, they may have seen some attempt at action, but an attempt which they probably viewed with some disfavour, and which had not justified itself by success. The days were passing, and no advance was being made ; popular sympathy, and perhaps even popular interest, was on the wane, while on the other hand the resentment of the official class was steadily rising, and boded danger. It is not a hazardous guess that in those fateful days the faith of more than one of the Twelve waxed cold and uncertain, and that all of them were in a state compounded of perplexity and irritation, caused by their Leader's incomprehensible failure to act.

In the breast of one of their number this feeling apparently grew into bitter anger ; he too, Judas, had probably " left all he had," and attached himself to this expedition, which seemed about to end in utter fiasco, and now he felt that he had been lured on by a pretender who, when the time came to make good his promises, proved impotent, a broken reed. Judas had expected the Kingdom to come immediately, with power ; the hated Roman to be driven out, the nation's independence to be regained at a stroke, himself together with the other disciples receiving honours and preferments as the personal friends of the Messiah. The more glowing his anticipations, the keener would be the sense of injury in such a man ; and from that sense of injury sprang the determination to deliver this sham-Messiah—in whom he for his part no longer believed, of whose behaviour in the Temple court, and whose utterance about the destruction of the Temple he, as a zealous Jew, may have disapproved—to the Sanhedrin (Mark xiv. 10, 11 ; Matt. xxvi. 14–16 ; Luke xxii. 3–6).

We need not assume, either with Matthew, that Judas' motive was money, or with Luke, that his action was so unaccountable as to require the explanation that Satan entered into him. Judas was a disappointed man, a man with a grudge, who, when he saw that so far from his dream being realized he might suffer a violent death for a cause in which he had ceased to have faith, resolved on a revenge which would at the same time be a means of escape. Tradition, from an early date, has woven its fancies round the character of the traitor-disciple, as when the Fourth Evangelist represents him as a thief, who feigned an interest in the poor, but was intent on private and illicit gain (John xii. 6). Nearly all that we are told about Judas, except the bare fact that He betrayed Jesus, lies open to serious suspicion ; and the very mention of the price supposed to have been paid to him by the chief priests (Matt. xxvi. 15) is only an Old Testament reminiscence of the Jewish-Christian Evangelist's, a supposed fulfilment of the words we read in Zech. xi. 12, " And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire ; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver." It is, of course, probable that Judas received a money-reward for turning informer ; but the details of the transaction are unknown, and the story of his subsequent repentance and suicide, his return of the price of blood and what the priests did with it, fulfilling a misquoted prophecy (Matt. xxvii. 3–10 ; *cf.* Zech. xi. 13), is purely legendary.

But *what was it that Judas betrayed* to the Sanhedrin ? It is truly strange that this all-important question arising in connection with a subject which has been so minutely considered, has, so far from being correctly answered, been hardly ever so much as seriously asked. The solution which has been universally acquiesced in is so palpably unsatisfactory that one marvels its unsatisfactoriness should not have provoked further inquiry. *What was it that Judas betrayed ?* The answer that it was the Lord's nightly abiding place in the mount of Olives is one which will not survive one moment's reflection. It needed no apostate disciple to reveal what any couple of emissaries from the Sanhedrin, unobtrusively shadowing the Lord and His companions in the evening, as they left Jerusalem, could have ascertained. Yet that is the impression which the Gospels convey, the fact being that, even at the time when the earliest Evangelist wrote, the true explanation had been lost. There was no difficulty at all about finding Jesus, who did not hide by night, and as for

arresting Him, He had given abundant legal justification for such a step since His arrival on the previous Monday.

But the Sanhedrin did not want merely to arrest our Lord on a charge for which He might have been scourged or imprisoned; they wanted to put Him to death, or, rather, to discover some charge on which the Roman Governor would have no choice but to pronounce a capital sentence. It was with this material that Judas provided them: *he disclosed to the Sanhedrin what Jesus had commanded, first the Three, then, after Peter's violation of this injunction, the Twelve, to keep absolutely to themselves, viz. the Messianic Secret.* With that fact— Jesus' claim to be the Messiah —in their possession, the Jewish authorities held the key to the situation; that claim might or might not be an offence punishable by death according to Jewish law—it was certainly one which Pilate was bound so to punish, as a menace against Cæsar's rule.

By the time that our Gospels were composed, this all-important clue had been lost, for Jesus was represented as having assumed the messianic *rôle* openly, and at a much earlier date. He had not done so; it was only in the course of His ministry that His messianic consciousness had taken shape; He had once, in a supreme moment, revealed His inmost conviction to His three closest friends, charging them to keep their knowledge to themselves; and, when one of them had broken the seal of His confidence, He had repeated the same injunction to the rest of the disciples. He had kept His secret undisclosed in Jerusalem, assured that it would be gloriously revealed shortly after the death which He was so eagerly seeking; and now, at the eleventh hour, when all other expedients to bring about that death seemed fruitless, the illwill and disappointment of Judas proved the instrument for giving effect to the Lord's purpose.

It was His claim to be the Christ of God, betrayed by Judas to the Sanhedrin, which sent Jesus to the cross.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HOURS OF DARKNESS

When Jesus had in set terms challenged the scribes and Pharisees to "fill up the measure of their fathers" who "slew the prophets," adding such unmeasured castigation as this—"Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 32, 33), He was, as we saw, making a supreme and final bid for death. Had He fallen then and there, slain in the heat of passion, a Victim of the rage He had done His utmost to unloose, He would have died happy, *beatus opportunitate*; but it was not to be so. Bloodshed in the Temple precincts, His opponents well knew, would mean the intervention of the Roman garrison, and might precipitate an awful massacre; they meant to be avenged on Jesus, they meant to make Him pay with His life for this crowning insult, but if possible under the forms of law. As He was allowed to depart, doubtless amid maledictions, it was with the knowledge that soon the blow would fall—the men who had smarted under His lash most probably threatened as much. Was it after this outburst that Judas, finally revolted, made His way to the Sanhedrin? Nothing forbids the supposition.

As we near the final stages of the events of the Lord's life on earth, it will be remembered that concerning the supreme date of all, the date of the crucifixion, our two traditions—the Synoptic and the Johannine—appear in direct and irreconcilable conflict: to put it briefly, the Synoptists, by stating that Jesus was crucified on the morrow after He had partaken of the Passover meal with His disciples, indicate the First Day of the Feast, *i.e.*, the 15th of Nisan, as the day of His death; while on the other hand the Fourth Evangelist not only tells us (John xix. 31) that the First Day of the Passover was the Sabbath *following* the crucifixion, which is therefore assigned to the 14th of Nisan, but also—and this quite explicitly—that the meal in which Jesus and the Twelve joined a few hours before His arrest was *not* the Passover meal. Of these two conflicting dates of the Lord's death we had seen[1]

[1] Chap. xv., pp. 241–242.

that the Johannine was for many reasons the more credible; and hence, apparently, the conclusion is forced on us that the Synoptic account of the nature of the last meal is founded on error.

And yet that position, too, is difficult to maintain, when we read (Mark xiv. 12–16; Matt. xxvi. 17–19; Luke xxii. 7–13) that the disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare for the eating of the Passover, that they made preparations in accordance with His instructions, and, in Luke xxii. 15, of Jesus saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you." Even if all this might be legendary—and it does not strike one as invention—there is yet one touch which we cannot regard as anything but based on recollection—set down because it happened, viz., the statement in Mark xiv. 26 and Matt. xxvi. 30, according to which the meal was concluded by the singing of a hymn, *i.e.*, the Hallel, with which the Passover ritual closed. But if this detail bears the stamp of genuineness, and if, as we think, it is decisive as to the character of the meal, we seem to be in a dilemma: for if the Lord partook of the Passover meal on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, He cannot have been crucified on the morning of that day.

A solution of this difficulty is offered by the eminent Jewish scholar, the late Joseph Jacobs, who informs us that in the years when the 15th of Nisan, the First Day of the Passover, fell on the Sabbath, and the killing and roasting of the lamb would therefore have taken place on the Sabbath eve, when no killing must be done and no fire be lit, it was customary among the more pious to anticipate the Passover meal by one day, slaying the lamb on the eve between the 13th and the 14th of Nisan, and eating it on the eve of the 14th.[1] If this is correct, then we may believe (1) with the Fourth Evangelist, that the Lord was crucified on the day preceding the First Day of the Passover, the 14th of Nisan; and (2) with the Synoptists, that the supper which He and the disciples shared on the 13th of Nisan was nevertheless the Passover meal, put back by twenty-four hours, just because in that year the feast commenced on the Sabbath. In this plausible and welcome reconciliation of seeming irreconcilables we may at least provisionally rest.

The Passover had to be eaten in Jerusalem; thither, then, "into the city" (Mark, Matt., Luke)—*i.e.*, probably from Bethany, to which they may have withdrawn after the stormy scene in the

[1] "*As Others Saw Him*," p. 166. So also Chwolson, *Das letzte Passamahl Christi*, quoted by Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, i. 312. See Note E, on p. 363.

Temple—Jesus despatched two of His disciples, according to Luke, Peter and John, to make the necessary preparations. As regards the instructions to the disciples which we read in the Gospels—how they were to meet a water-carrier, who would take them to the house destined to serve as the scene of the celebration —they recall on the one hand the directions for the finding of the ass which was to carry Jesus into the capital (Mark xi. 1 and parallels), while on the other they are reminiscent of Samuel's instructions to Saul (1 Sam. x. 2–9). Once more it seems as if there had been some sort of previous arrangement with the "goodman of the house," as there had been with the owner of the ass; but the endeavour of the Evangelists is to find everywhere instances of supernatural foreknowledge on the Lord's part, and this tendency is nowhere more marked than in the Passion narratives. Jesus did feel, indeed, that the end was now drawing very nigh—there may have been sufficient in Judas' demeanour to warn Him whence danger was threatening ; but we distinguish between the insight which gives foresight, and the accurate prediction of all manner of details which belongs to the domain of *haggada*.

On the evening of the 13th of Nisan the Master and His friends gathered in an upper chamber in Jerusalem round a table spread for a repast, and gathered so for the last time. Fragmentary as our accounts are, we can gather from them that the atmosphere in that room was strangely compounded of exaltation and sadness —sadness unto death, exaltation soaring beyond this world. For all that the fate which was now unmistakably approaching Him had been eagerly sought, masterfully contrived, by Jesus Himself, yet, now that each pulse-beat brought it nearer, He could hardly fail to experience a momentary reaction. Had he fallen, as we think He wished, in one of the repeated disputes in the Temple, it had been easier for Him to die ; but from the prospect which now presented itself to Him—that of being, on some pretext, condemned to execution as a malefactor, with indignity and torture, instead of a quick ending by blow or thrust—He may very conceivably have shrunk. Nor can we quite exclude the possibility that now, with the crisis so near, He may have experienced the anguish of temporary misgivings : what if, after all, He had been mistaken in anticipating a speedy return in glory, to inaugurate the Kingdom of God? Yet these uncertainties could only be as fleeting clouds against a background of assured hope ; it could not be but that the Kingdom was at hand, just beyond the veil which He was about to pass through, and which

was then to fall for ever; and in this conviction, and as its outward symbol, the supper over which He presides becomes to Him a foretaste of the messianic Banquet which He and His would so soon celebrate together.

Nevertheless, before that consummation was reached, there must be an interval of suffering from which it was impossible for Jesus to avert His gaze. While the meal was in progress, we read (Mark xiv. 18–21; Matt. xxvi. 21–25; Luke xxii. 21–23; John xiii. 21–30) that He made pointed reference to the impending tragic interlude, telling His companions that one of their own number would betray Him, and indicating Judas either vaguely or explicitly as His betrayer—so explicitly, according to the Fourth Gospel, as to bid him hasten to accomplish the evil work on which he was set. Deeply moving and hallowed by reason of its pathos as this tradition is, its historical character must be pronounced far from certain. It is difficult to believe that the disciple who, by that time, must have already betrayed his Lord would have carried his treachery to the odious length of taking part in this meal. In Matthew's version Judas, even after Jesus has plainly and before all the rest designated him as the traitor, remains at the table and partakes of the bread and wine, nor are we told when he separated himself from his companions and sought out the confederates with whom, according to all the Evangelists, he was shortly after to appear in Gethsemane; it is only in the Fourth Gospel that he is driven forth into the night by the words of Jesus Himself to carry out his purpose. Neither presentation of the events can claim to belong to history, for it is quite incredible that the other disciples would either have tolerated the continued presence of the traitor as one of the company, or allowed him to depart on his nefarious errand unhindered. The story as it stands is merely intended to emphasize the Lord's supernatural foreknowledge, and to dispel in advance the idea that He was taken unawares or against His will; but the very obviousness of the purpose militates against the credibility of the incident.

In reality Judas was probably absent from the Last Supper, and Jesus interpreted his absence only too accurately as evidence of what was impending; that He was prepared to die, and wished to die, made it none the less an exceeding bitter experience for Him that one of His own intimates had turned against Him. No doubt, the disciples, on hearing the Lord's complaint, and filled with the presentiment of woe, were exceeding sorrowful; and from the remembrance of that sorrow the tradition grew.

Indeed, we have only to compare the narratives amongst each other—the quite general indication of the traitor in Mark and Luke ; the question of the disciples, utterly improbable in itself, in Mark and Matthew, " Is it I ? "—as though the guilty one needed to be informed of his guilt ; the definite naming of Judas as the betrayer in Matthew ; and the still more developed version in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus declares the identity of the traitor by dipping a piece of bread into the dish and giving it to Judas—to see the legend growing under our eyes.

It was a time of ebb and flow, of mood succeeding mood, in the mind of the Holy One ; from the unfaithful disciple His thoughts turned, by a natural reaction, to the others, who clustered around Him, and whose affection He could not doubt. Judas had failed Him : " but ye," He said, " have continued with Me in My trials "—their fidelity would surely not go unrewarded. As the Father had assigned royal power to Him, so He assigned to them the right of eating and drinking at His table in His coming Reign, and of sitting on thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. The reference is, of course, to the messianic Banquet ; how near He judged that consummation to be, is plain from His confident statement that He would not eat nor drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God should come. Yet how painfully His feeling fluctuated all through those hours may be judged from the words in which He presently began to express His misgivings as to the continued loyalty of the very disciples whose constancy He had but just exalted ; might not the defection of Judas be speedily followed by that of his colleagues ? That Jesus expressed such fears, and met with eager reassurances of devotion, cannot be doubted ; that He specially singled out Peter for admonition is far less certain ; while the definite prediction of the disciples' approaching flight and of Peter's denial—" This night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice "—is legendary accretion, intended to show the Lord's miraculous prevision. Peter did deny Jesus in the night when He was betrayed, and the disciples did flee and were dispersed : hence, it was felt, both events must have been foretold by the Saviour, and a text in Zech. xiii. 7, " Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," seeming apposite to the occasion, though its original meaning was quite different, its quotation was, with the same motive, attributed to Him.

Perhaps—for we are moving in a region of confused memories and disjointed traditions—these sadder thoughts began to assail

Him only when He and the disciples exchanged the lighted room and the festal banquet for the chill and darkness of the night ; for the moment, with the idea of the nearness of the Kingdom uppermost in His mind, He performed an act the meaning of which we shall have to examine with all the greater care in view of the differences between the various witnesses who have recorded it for us. These witnesses to the institution of the communion rite are four—the Synoptists and the Apostle Paul (Mark xiv. 22–25 ; Matt. xxvi. 26–29 ; Luke xxii. 15–20 ; 1 Cor. xi. 23–25) ; the Fourth Evangelist, for reasons of his own, which will presently become apparent, omits this incident altogether.

If we confine ourselves to relating in outline what these four writers tell us, we shall certainly find a preponderating amount of agreement between their versions. During the progress of the meal, we read, Jesus broke a loaf of bread and distributed the pieces among the disciples, bidding them eat it as His Body, in remembrance of Him ; and in similarly letting a large common cup pass around, He told them that this was the new covenant in His Blood, adding that He would not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine until He should drink it new in the Kingdom of God. But even this is already a composite account : thus it is, for instance, only St. Paul and Luke who report Jesus as bidding the disciples to " do this in remembrance " of Him ; where Mark and Matthew write, " Take, eat ; this is My Body," Luke adds (but not in all MSS.), " which is given for you," and 1 Cor. xi. 24, " which is (broken) for you." To Mark's, " This is My Blood of the covenant, which is shed for many," Matthew adds, " unto remission of sins," while Luke gives the words in a different form, viz. " This *cup*, which is being poured out for you, is the new covenant in My Blood " ; that is to say, it is the pouring out of the cup, not the shedding of the blood, which constitutes the covenant-symbol,[1] and it is poured out not " for many," but " for *you*," *i.e.*, the disciples present. But what is even more remarkable is that the words in Luke xxii. 19*b*, 20, " . . . *which is given for you. . . . And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup which is being poured out for you, is the new covenant in My Blood*," are not found either in the Codex Bezæ (D), which is of special importance for Luke's Gospel, or in the old Latin version, or Itala, which preceded that of Jerome. Now in the *textus receptus* of Luke these verses have all the appearance of an interpolation, not only because they almost verbally reproduce what

[1] This meaning, unmistakable in the original, is obscured in the English rendering of A.V. and R.V.

we find in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, but especially because Luke xxii. 17, 18 has already made mention of the cup which Jesus had bidden the disciples divide among themselves, adding, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." That the Evangelist should have spoken of the cup twice over, each time attaching a different meaning to it, is in the last degree unlikely.

In view of these divergences and textual uncertainties the question becomes not only legitimate but inevitable, whether it is probable that Jesus should have made such a declaration as that with which our witnesses credit Him in regard to (1) the purpose of His death, and (2) the symbolism of the bread and wine, which in a mystical sense are identified with His Body and Blood. Neither in Judaism—whether in its earlier or its later forms—nor in the thought of our Lord, except in this one place, do we find anything sacramental; and this identification of body and blood with bread and wine is so utterly unlike any of the thoughts He was in the habit of expressing that only custom can blind us to the fact that it constitutes an alien element. And if it be urged that the oldest tradition, that of St. Paul, supports that of the Synoptists, that only brings us to the question as to the origin of this very Pauline tradition. Now it is a remarkable circumstance that in introducing his account of what happened in the night in which Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor. xi. 23), St. Paul does not say that he learnt the facts from the other apostles, but makes use of the very striking formula, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you"—words which recall his statement concerning the substance of his preaching (Gal. i. 12), "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but [*it came to me*] through revelation of Jesus Christ." That is to say that, so far from invoking, he repudiates human authority both for his teaching in general and for his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in particular, but declares that his knowledge has come to him through supernatural channels. For those who are prepared to accept such a claim as sufficient evidence to a historical fact, the matter, of course, ends there; those, however, whom it leaves less than satisfied will inquire whether by any chance such sacramental ideas as those which St. Paul attributes to Jesus were current elsewhere than in Christianity in that epoch of the world's history, and may have been imported into the nascent religion from outside.

The answer to the first part of that question is that all through Asia Minor and Greece in those days so-called mystery-religions

abounded—religions which centred in youthful saviour-divinities who died and rose again, and whose cults included among their characteristic features ritual meals through participation in which the worshippers attained to communion with the divinity. If we remember that it was St. Paul who revolutionized Christianity by shifting the centre of the Gospel to the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus ; if we remember that in the very city of his birth and upbringing mystery-cults flourished, we shall not think it unlikely that the sacramental character of the Last Supper, the partaking, under the symbols of bread and wine, of the Body and Blood of the Saviour, must be traced to him, rather than to Jesus. In the masterful hands of the great Apostle the Gospel became a mystery-religion, in which the believer, by sharing in consecrated, " transubstantiated " food and drink, was made one with the Redeemer, and so obtained eternal life.[1]

With these ideas which he took from non-Jewish sources, St. Paul combined (*a*) the thought of a new covenant which he found in Jer. xxxi. 31–34, the covenant between Yahveh and Israel, in virtue of which God could forgive His people's iniquity, and (*b*) the much older thought of Exod. xxiv. 8, where we read of Moses sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on the people, in token of the covenant between Yahveh and themselves. That he convinced himself of having received his interpretation of the Last Supper by direct revelation from on high need not be called in question ; but that the sacramentalism which so deeply colours

[1] Something more than accidental correspondence is at work when we read that " at Byblus, in a Spring festival, the death of Adonis was first celebrated by the mourning of women, and then on the next day his resurrection and translation to heaven were celebrated with shouts of joy " ; or that " in Phrygia, Attis, the lover of the ' Great Mother ' Cybele, plays the part of Adonis in Syria ; his festival was held at the time of the Spring Equinox, and lasted four days. First the death of the god . . . was celebrated with songs of lamentation, and was symbolically represented by the chief priest. . . . Afterwards on the fourth day followed the ' Feast of Joy,' in celebration of the resurrection of the god, when the priest anointed the mouths of the mourners, speaking the while the formula, ' Be of good cheer, ye pious ; as the god is saved, so will salvation come to us from all our trials.' " (Pfleiderer, *Early Christian Conception of Christ*, pp. 94–95). Mithra " is also a Dying God, whose blood saves mankind, since he is ultimately and mystically identical with the bull which he sacrifices to the Sun " (Prof. Gilbert Murray, art. " Pagan Religion at the Coming of Christianity," in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 632). As for the Sacramental Meal, " the eating of consecrated food, which is not simply the symbol but also in mysterious fashion the shrine of the life of the deity, has always formed part of the ritual of every nation. Upon this rests the sacramental significance of the sacrificial feast ; it effects a sacred communion with the life of the deity, which is contained in the flesh and blood of the victim (itself an incarnation of the primitive nature-deity), and is thus appropriated by those who partake of them. Thus in the cult of Dionysus a bull, which is regarded as an incarnation of the god of fertility, is torn with the teeth and its flesh eaten raw, that by means of this repetition of the sacrifice of the god himself his divine life may be transferred to those who partake in the ceremony. Often in place of the real flesh a substitute in the form of a loaf baked in the shape of the victim was eaten sacramentally " (Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127).

the accounts of that supper in the Synoptic Gospels was imported into those writings from those of the Apostle—that it represents the ideas, and even reproduces the words, of St. Paul, and not of Jesus—seems to us fairly proved.

With the elimination of this foreign, Pauline element from the Synoptic narratives, the question as to the original significance of the rite—the distribution of bread and wine by Jesus—becomes easier to answer, and that, curiously enough, especially in the light of the Fourth Evangelist's complete silence concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper. We remember how on one occasion Jesus had celebrated a common meal with a large number of His followers, not far from Bethsaida[1]; the Gospels record this repast as the feeding of the multitudes, but we saw reason to regard it as a symbolical celebration in advance of that messianic Banquet which occupied so large a place in the apocalyptic imaginings of the age. We also saw that the Fourth Evangelist, by his comments on this occurrence, showed that He rightly interpreted the act of Jesus as symbolical in intention, though his own symbolism takes a definitely sacramental form; and thus, having already recorded one "Lord's Supper," he thinks it unnecessary to record another on the occasion of this last meal of the Master with the disciples, which he makes the occasion of quite another symbolical rite, viz., the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus (John xiii. 3–11). Had the latter incident really taken place, we cannot doubt that it would have found a place in the Synoptics; what did take place was the breaking of bread and the passing of the common cup on the night of the Lord's arrest, and the significance of that act becomes clear to us when we realize that on both occasions—at the lake-side and in the upper room—the same procedure and the same ritual phraseology are employed: Jesus *took* the bread, *blessed*, *broke*, and *gave* it. In both cases, that is to say, we are dealing with a symbolic representation of the messianic Banquet, an earnest of the nearness of the Kingdom. That this is the historical core of the incident becomes plain, both from the Lord's explicit promise to the disciples that they should eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom, and from His statement that the next time He drank wine it would be in that blessed Reign. That is a thought which harmonizes with everything we know of the historical Jesus, but it does not harmonize at all with the thought expressed in the declaration, "This is My Blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission

[1] Chap. ix., p. 143 ff.

of sins"; the latter is pure Paulinism, superimposed on the genuine utterance of the Lord.

The rite, then, was a promise—this time not to be misunderstood by those who participated in it—and a pledge. Jesus was going away, and, though He expected quite an early return, He did not profess to know the day or the hour. He may have recalled how, the year before, His ardent hopes in the immediate appearance of the Kingdom had been disappointed; He had expected the new age to dawn before the disciples should have had time so much as to deliver their message in the cities of Israel, but their mission had met with scant success, and in God's counsel the advent of the Kingdom had been delayed. There might be delays again, and He feared for the staying-power of His intimates; that was why—if St. Paul and Luke[1] are trustworthy witnesses on this point—He pledged them to remember Him whenever they should meet for a common meal during the time of His absence. The messianic significance of the rite was quickly lost; but as a feast of remembrance no less than a mystical communion of the faithful with their Saviour the "breaking of bread" was certainly celebrated in the Church from the earliest ages onward.

The repast had come to an end, the Hallel been sung, and now the Master and His band of followers sought, as they had done on preceding nights, their camping-ground on the mount of Olives, like many pilgrims of the poorer class, who could not find, or afford, lodgings in the overcrowded capital. It was probably while they were on the way from the city that Jesus gave expression to His apprehensions regarding the steadfastness of the disciples in the crisis which He felt almost upon Him (Mark xiv. 27–31; Matt. xxvi. 31–35; Luke xxii. 31–38). Doubtless His words of warning and anxiety were afterwards elaborated into definite predictions of what actually took place—Peter's denials, the disciples' flight; doubtless, too, the words, peculiar to Mark, "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee" (xiv. 28), which do not fit at all into their context, represent a gloss intended to harmonize with the angel's words addressed to the women at the tomb, "He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you" (Mark xvi. 7). But that Jesus should have uttered words of solemn admonition to the companions He was so soon to leave, and that they, and especially Peter, made rash vows of fidelity to the death,

[1] Codex D omits also the command to repeat the ceremony.

vows ere long to be remembered with bitter shame, is entirely credible.

Far less easy to understand, and yet so unlikely to have been invented that we must assume it to rest on some actual utterance, is a statement in Luke according to which Jesus on the same occasion instructed the disciples in view of the coming emergency to provide themselves, not only with money, but with swords, even if they had to sell their cloaks for weapons ; yet that when He was informed that the disciples had two swords between them, He answered, " Enough ! "—as though He wished to break off the conversation. Not only is the advice to use arms quite contrary to the Lord's general teaching, but it cannot be reconciled with the tradition which made Him rebuke the disciple who shortly after used a sword to defend his Master. The Evangelist reproduces some faulty or confused reminiscence of a saying the original form of which seems irrecoverable. One infinitely pathetic word of the Lord's we find in the same context, Luke xxii. 37*b*, which should be rendered, not, " That which concerneth Me hath fulfilment," but, " My affairs are at an end "—*actum est de me* (Luke xxii. 35–38).

From the outskirts of the city, across the brook Kidron, up the lower slopes of the mount of Olives and to the garden, or farm, of Gethsemane, " the Oil-press," was a distance of only half a mile ; there a halt was made, and the disciples prepared for the night's rest (Mark xiv. 32–42 ; Matt. xxvi. 36–46 ; Luke xxii. 40–46). It is not necessary for us to assume that Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen, and that presently His arrest would be effected ; but unquestionably He was weighed down by the presentiment of doom, and began to be " greatly amazed and sore troubled," " exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Though He had shaped His whole course to bring about the end which was now drawing bodefully nigh, He was human enough to wish that His tribulation were over, or even that at the last moment God might find some other way than the baptism of blood with which He was about to be baptized. He needed to calm and fortify His soul in prayer, in communion with His Father ; but yet—and this too is very human—He wanted at this dread hour to have His friends at not too great a distance while He was so engaged, and begged them to watch and pray. Mark, closely followed by Matthew, tells us that only Peter, James, and John were witnesses of what ensued, a feature which Luke, perhaps with a simpler tradition before him, rejects ; it is permissible to

hazard the guess that the singling out of these three disciples is merely part of Mark's convention, and to contend that his presentation of the scene of the Master's agony sacrifices probability to elaboration, while Luke's shorter version of this most moving episode is far more convincing. That Jesus went away from the three disciples three times, each time uttering the same prayer, and that each time on His return He found them asleep, in spite of exhortations and reproofs, bears all the marks of artificiality; it is far easier to believe in Luke's version, which tells us that He "was parted from them"—*i.e.*, the Eleven—"about a stone's cast," but that during His prolonged agony they were overcome by slumber, and were so found by Him after He had risen from His prayer. The reproachful question to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour?" has the ring of genuineness; but surely there was not the going backward and forward of which Mark and Matthew speak. It is conceivable that the events of the last few days, with their disappointment, tension, and anxiety, had taken toll of the disciples' nerves and energy—that they were genuinely exhausted; Luke's explanatory remark that they were sleeping "for sorrow," if only a guess, may be very near the truth, and is at any rate true to a not uncommon experience.

It is possible that the prayer which, according to Luke, Jesus asked His friends to offer as soon as they had reached Gethsemane, was not that *they*, but that *He*, might not enter into temptation—the temptation at the last moment to shrink from the sacrifice. The spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak. It was this supreme temptation, assuredly, with which He was wrestling in that dark hour; face to face with death, the will to live asserted itself, and had to be overcome by the stronger will to do or to suffer in absolute compliance with the guidance of God. He may even have told the disciples that He meant to pray that if it were possible—*i.e.*, in conformity with the Father's will—the hour might pass away from Him, and its menace remain unfulfilled; in any case there is no room to doubt that we possess a substantially correct account, based probably in the first place upon Peter's recollections, of an unforgettable scene. A pedantic criticism has asked how the disciples could have heard and reported the words of His prayer if, as we are told, Jesus found them asleep; the answer is that He was probably engaged in prayer a long time, and that while He found the disciples asleep when He returned to them, there is no reason for assuming that they were overcome by slumber immediately, without so much as hearing His opening words.

Either while He was still on His knees, or, more likely, after He had risen, calmed and strengthened, the last temptation conquered, there was a glare of lanterns and torches flashing hither and thither, as if in search for someone, together with approaching footsteps and voices (Mark xiv. 41–52; Matt. xxvi. 45–56; Luke xxii. 47–53; John xviii. 2–11). Our supposition is that before this happened the Lord had rejoined His followers, bidding them to "sleep on now, and take their rest" (Mark xiv. 41; Matt. xxvi. 45)—words which could only mean that for the moment He thought there was no danger to be apprehended. Perhaps they were all actually asleep till the moment before the miscellaneous crowd charged with the capture of Jesus was upon them. These were probably not the regular Temple guards, still less, as the Fourth Gospel states, would they be Roman soldiers, but a chance assemblage of irregulars—armed, some of them with swords, others with bludgeons; they were presumably not sent by the Sanhedrin as a whole, but by the ruling high-priest, whose servant seems to have been in command of what was a raid rather than a legal arrest. At the first glance Jesus guessed their errand, and roused His companions: the hour which He had prayed might pass away from Him was come, His earthly fate was sealed. We may be certain that the scene which followed was very brief; that the armed resistance which one or the other among the disciples offered to the high-priest's emissaries was speedily overpowered; that the latter carried out their task expeditiously, and led off their Prisoner without having to make more than a show of using their weapons. The only protest which Jesus is stated to have made was against the manner of His seizure—they had come out as against a robber, while they might have taken Him by day in the Temple; but whether we have any trustworthy report of words spoken under circumstances of so much confusion—words which seem more suitable to the Lord's appearance before the Jewish authorities—or whether there is any foundation for the statement that one of the disciples struck off the ear of the high-priest's servant with his sword, and was rebuked by Jesus for doing so, is questionable.

All the Gospels attribute to Judas a leading part in effecting the Lord's capture; the Synoptists strangely introduce him as "one of the Twelve," as though he had never been mentioned before, nor any previous hint been given of his treachery. But, though it is possible that he was present at the arrest, there was no compelling ground for his presence; the suggestion that it was

necessary for him to indicate Jesus as the one to be seized, or that his betrayal consisted in guiding the captors to the Lord's resting-place, may be dismissed ; the statement that he " betrayed the Son of man with a kiss " is merely the kind of picturesque detail popular fancy loves to add, in order to deepen abhorrence of a villain. If Judas had still been available, one thinks that his employers would have made him appear as a witness at the trial of Jesus, where he would have been far more useful than at the arrest ; since he did not so appear, it is legitimate to doubt whether he was really with the crowd which invaded Gethsemane.

One wonders why Mark, amid these momentous events, should have thought it worth while to tell an anecdote concerning a young man, clad only in a linen cloth, who, when in danger of being arrested, left his sole garment in the hands of the high-priest's minions, and escaped naked. All manner of conjectures have found favour, especially the hypothesis that the young man was none other than John Mark, the Evangelist himself, who in this manner supplied a kind of " artist's signature in a dark corner of the picture." It is, indeed, possible enough that the Last Supper was held in the house of Mark's mother, that the youth followed the Master and the disciples to the mount of Olives, saw Jesus at prayer while Peter and the rest were asleep, and witnessed the Lord's arrest. What is more to the point, and open to no doubt, is that all the disciples dispersed and fled, glad to be let go—all but one, who followed the procession to the high-priest's house from a distance, and mingled with the crowd in the courtyard. Simon Peter was not a hero, and was soon to demonstrate the contrary, but he loved Jesus with an affection that was the deepest thing about him.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that our accounts of the proceedings which now followed (Mark xiv. 53–72 ; Matt. xxvi. 57–75; Luke xxii. 54–71 ; John xviii. 12–27) should be in a very tangled condition ; the swiftness with which the tragedy unrolled itself, the tendency to legendary embellishment, above all, the defective attestation on which even the earliest traditions were based, rendered such a result inevitable. When Mark and Matthew tell us that Jesus was straightway haled before the high-priest and the whole Sanhedrin, and was then and there tried and sentenced to death, the obstacles to such a version of the events are, indeed, insurmountable. For it is not to be imagined that the whole Sanhedrin, a body of seventy-one members, should have been assembled in the high-priest's residence in the dead of

night, waiting for a prisoner who, for all they knew, might even yet evade arrest; nor is it at all likely that they would have had their array of witnesses all in readiness. A trial had to be held by daytime, if the decisions of the Council were to be valid; and though, if our Evangelists were rightly informed, there were plenty of illegalities in the proceedings against Jesus, we need not assume that the Sanhedrin would have departed from established custom to the extent of hearing this case by night. Luke gives us what on the face of it appears a more accurate version, by telling us that while the Lord was taken to the high-priest's house for the night, and remained there in custody, the trial did not take place either then or there, but at break of day, and in the council-chamber—in fact, it was not till then that the Sanhedrin met and examined Jesus, but did not pass any sentence on Him—a significant point of difference (Luke xxii. 66–71). And the Fourth Evangelist, following what seems a well-informed source, states that the captors of Jesus "led Him to Annas first," the father-in-law of the ruling high-priest Caiaphas, to whom Annas subsequently sent Him bound (John xviii. 13, 14). The probability therefore is that the proceedings during the night—*i.e.*, before Annas—were of a purely preliminary character, including some questions addressed to the Prisoner concerning His teaching and His disciples, while the session of the Council was not held until the morning. A recollection that this was the true order of events is found in Mark xv. 1 and Matt. xxvii. 1, where we read that "in the morning . . . the whole Council held a consultation" or "took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death," which implicitly contradicts these Evangelists' accounts of the death sentence having been pronounced during the night.

But the establishment of this point advances us only one step along a road which is sown with pitfalls and entanglements. It will be well for us to ask ourselves frankly what are our chances of knowing the exact nature of the proceedings against Jesus before the Sanhedrin: who are the eye-witnesses on whose recollections we can rely? The sitting was not public, and such reports as would percolate through those closed doors would only be in the nature of hearsay, altering its form a little every time it passed from mouth to mouth. Once we realize how precarious are our sources of information, we shall not wonder at the discrepancies between our narratives.

According to Mark, whom Matthew in the main follows, the Sanhedrin had sought out all manner of false witnesses against Jesus, with a view of proving a capital offence; but failed in their

object, though witnesses were plentiful: that is a mere vague and general statement, too unsubstantial to be of any value. But then we read of a more specific charge, characterized as false by Mark, but not by Matthew—a charge which Jesus leaves unanswered—viz., that He had said He would, or was able to, destroy the Temple, and in or after three days build another. It is difficult to believe that this charge was entirely without foundation, and the Fourth Evangelist is probably correct in reporting such an utterance of the Lord's in connection with the cleansing of the Temple.[1] Mark's extreme eagerness to stigmatize it as untrue contrasts with Matthew's far more non-committal attitude, and is not as convincing as he intends it to be.[2] The admission, had Jesus made it, of the use of such words, would certainly have excited considerable animus against Him (*cf.* Mark xv. 29; Matt. xxvii. 40), and prejudiced such of the councillors as might have been wavering, though whether the words could have formed sufficient ground for a capital sentence is highly doubtful; at most it was constructive blasphemy, whereas Jewish law insisted that a blasphemy must be "without disguise." But indeed it is questionable whether this saying about the Temple was urged as a possible justification for a sentence of death, or whether it was urged at all, save in passing, as one of the Prisoner's numerous objectionable deliverances; it is at most remotely possible that this saying might have been held to imply a messianic claim, on the ground that in some Jewish circles it was believed that in the coming age the Messiah would rebuild the Temple (Enoch xc. 28). Luke, who certainly had Mark's Gospel before him, has not a word to say about this accusation or the depositions of false witnesses—a very extraordinary omission. Indeed in view of the discrepancies between the Marcan and the Lucan accounts, we cannot but ask the question—*Was there a "trial" of Jesus before the Sanhedrin at all, and a sentence of execution passed by that body,* or was there only what Mark calls a "consultation" of the members of the Council in the morning (Mark xv. 1), as the outcome of which they delivered Jesus to the Roman Governor to be dealt with, *i.e.*, on a charge which it was hoped would compel Pilate to pass sentence of death?

Such a question is not merely legitimate, but inevitable: firstly, because there is something essentially unreal about a trial for life for alleged offences—such as threatening to destroy the

[1] *Cf.* chap. xv., p. 256.

[2] "Le rédacteur, qui ne recule devant aucune invraisemblance, et que la contradiction même n'effraye pas, ajoute aussitôt que le témoignage de ces gens qui disent la même chose n'était pas concordant" (Loisy, *L'Evangile selon Marc*, p. 429).

Temple, humanly speaking an impossibility—which Pilate, with his well-known contempt for Judaism, would not have allowed to be punished by death; secondly, because when Jesus is brought before Pilate, it is not with a request on the Council's part for the ratification of a judgment on a case of blasphemy, but with a new accusation, viz., that He claimed to be the King of the Jews; and lastly because, if there was really a trial before the Sanhedrin, it violated Jewish legal procedure in most important particulars. According to Jewish practice in a capital case, the witnesses for the defence had to be heard first; there had to be orderly voting, with a minimum majority of two votes; above all, sentence of death could not be pronounced on the same day on which the case was heard, but required a second sitting on the day following. For this reason it is even doubtful whether a capital case could have been heard on the day preceding a Sabbath—as in this instance—because no judicial business could have been transacted on the Sabbath itself. But we must further ask why the Sanhedrin should have held a trial at all, if on the one hand they could not carry out a capital sentence on their own authority, and if on the other they could both bring the Prisoner before Pilate and formulate a charge against Him which made a death sentence practically certain? This was precisely what the authorities did in due course; for, as we have pointed out already, they did not call on Pilate to ratify a sentence they had already pronounced, or to permit it to be executed, but appeared as the prosecution with an entirely new charge, or set of charges, against Jesus, whom they accuse, not of blasphemy, but of stirring up sedition, agitating against the payment of taxes to the Imperial government, and pretending to be "an anointed king" (Luke xxiii. 2, R.V. marg.).

The tradition that it was the Sanhedrin which in the first place found the Lord guilty of death had its origin in the bitter controversies between the early Church and Judaism, and in the pronounced desire of the early Christians not to be on terms of enmity with the Roman power; hence the tendency would arise to lay the blame for the wrongful death of the Saviour exclusively on the universally unpopular Jews, while proportionately exculpating the Roman authorities—the tendency which meets us full-grown in the legendary accounts of the extreme reluctance of Pilate to let Jesus be crucified. Morally, no doubt, the Sanhedrin was guilty, for it, and not Pilate, had moved to take action against Jesus; but early Christianity was anxious to show that official Judaism was also technically guilty of having crucified the Lord

of glory. Knowing the hostility of the Jewish authorities towards Jesus, and not knowing the exact nature of the proceedings behind the doors of the council-chamber, the earliest believers were ready to infer that it was "the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes" who had sentenced Him to the cross.

Is it possible for us, having regard to the nature of the data at our disposal, to reconstitute the scene enacted in that hall as the morning of Friday, the 14th of Nisan, dawned? We think it likely, in the first place—though this is merely surmise—that the body which was hurriedly called together was not the full Council of seventy-one, but the quorum, or lesser Sanhedrin, of twenty-three members, which was quite competent to deal with the case, besides being more easily assembled, and probably more amenable to the wishes of Annas and Caiaphas. Apart from the fact that Caiaphas presided, the proceedings were probably informal rather than otherwise, the object being not to try Jesus for any stated offence, but to consider what steps to take against Him, in order to compass this offensive and troublesome agitator's death (Mark xv. 1; Matt. xxvii. 1). The Council, in other words, met as an executive rather than a judicial body, to decide upon practical measures. At such a gathering it is quite in accordance with probability that a good many random accusations were made against the Prisoner, amongst others that of having said He would destroy the Temple and in three days build another. But these charges—on none of which He could have been found legally guilty of death, whatever other form of punishment they might have entailed—were not the real business of the meeting, though they explained and expressed the prevailing resentment against Jesus; the meeting had to devise and sanction a means which would serve to hand the Prisoner over to Pilate on a capital charge, with the practical certainty of His condemnation following. Now, as we know, certain highly important information had reached the heads of the Sanhedrin—probably Annas and Caiaphas—perhaps not twenty-four hours ago, viz., that Jesus privately claimed to be the future Messiah, and it was this very information which had led to His quite irregular capture in Gethsemane; but the person on whose evidence this statement rested was apparently not prepared to come forward—at least, there is no trace of his having done so—and besides, a single witness was insufficient to substantiate a charge. True, in any case, a claim to be the Messiah was not an offence punishable by death according to Jewish law—it could not even be fairly

interpreted as blasphemy, on which Lev. xxiv. 16 pronounced death by stoning. But inasmuch as the Sanhedrin could not have carried out—according to the Talmud, could not even have passed—such a sentence, which Pilate would have contemptuously refused to confirm,[1] we may take it that the members of the Council were very little concerned with the *Jewish* aspect of such an offence, except so far as it might serve as a pretext; the important object in proving messianic pretensions against Jesus was that they would render Him liable to a charge *læsæ majestatis* under the *Roman* law. Since there were no two witnesses to this claim—and this alone proves how closely the messianic secret had been kept, and how baseless is the notion that Jesus had revealed His Messiahship to the general public in entering Jerusalem—one means alone remained; this was to put the Prisoner, who, as we are told, had preserved a complete silence,[2] on His oath, and so to challenge Him to declare whether He professed indeed to be "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One." Such a demand for confession was expressly forbidden by the doctors of the Law, and in a *trial* would have been absolutely illegal; the informal proceedings before the Sanhedrin, however, were not a trial, and hence Caiaphas could issue such a challenge without technical impropriety. Undoubtedly he did so, and as undoubtedly it was this charge—that of claiming to be the Messiah—upon which our Lord was presently handed over to the Roman Governor.

So much being certain, the answer of Jesus must have been, or understood to be, in the affirmative, and so Mark reports it, viz., a plain and emphatic, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." But where Mark gives us this quite explicit reply, Matthew's version can only be described as ambiguous or even evasive—"So you say,"—which is at most a qualified or reluctant affirmative, with the addition, "Nevertheless I tell you that later on you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." And Luke reports a very different rejoinder, viz., "If I tell you, you will not believe Me, and if I ask you a question, you will not answer. But from this time forward the Son of man will be seated at God's right hand in power." The Sanhedrin, unsatisfied by such a statement, press Him further to declare whether *He* is the Son of God, only

[1] *Cf.* Acts xviii. 15, where Gallio dismisses what he calls "questions of words and names" and the Jewish law.

[2] Perhaps in conscious fulfilment of Isa. liii. 7.

to receive once more the answer, "*You* say that I am." It is impossible not to catch in these replies a note of reservation, and we must ask ourselves to what this may be due.

We shall once more bear in mind that the evidence even of the first disciples of what happened at the meeting of the Council was hearsay evidence, unsifted and unsiftable ; but it seems plain that if Jesus had answered the question as to His Messiahship with a simple "I am," no one could have invented the Lucan version, "If I tell you, you will not believe Me, and if I ask you a question, you will not answer." We take it that the Lord shrank to the last from revealing His secret, especially to men who were incapable of understanding what *He* meant by the messianic office. It was quite true that had He said "Yes," they would not have believed Him, and had He asked them a counter-question, intended to elucidate the meaning of the Messiahship, they would have declined to be drawn into an argument. What He does tell them is that the Messiah, the Son of man, is going to be manifested in power in the near future ; and when they grow more urgent and inquire whether He Himself is the Messiah, He will not deny it, but words His affirmative answer in such a way as to throw responsibility for it on His questioners. Qualified as His admission was, it sufficed for the Sanhedrin's purpose : if the high-priest did indeed exclaim, "Ye have heard the blasphemy" —if he indeed rent his clothes to express his horror—he did so only for appearance sake ; his real relief comes out in the exclamation, "What further need have we of witness ? " They had now, out of Jesus' own mouth, evidence on which to base an accusation to which Pilate could not choose but listen, and which meant death to the Accused. That the Sanhedrin itself passed sentence of death on Jesus for alleged blasphemy, only to bring Him before Pilate immediately on quite another charge, is wholly improbable.

In Mark's and Matthew's narratives the attainment of the Sanhedrin's object is made the signal for a carnival of brutality directed against the hapless Prisoner, who is spat upon and buffeted, struck with the open hand and coarsely jeered at (Mark xiv. 65 ; Matt. xxvi. 67, 68). These stories are the more painful, but also, fortunately, the less credible, because we are led to understand that it was members of the Council who gave themselves up to these excesses of vindictive spite. In Luke xxii. 63, 64, on the other hand, the ill-treatment of the Lord precedes, instead of following, His appearance before the Sanhedrin, and it is not the members of that assembly but the high-priest's underlings, His captors, who are guilty of these outrages. The

details of this dreadful episode at any rate seem to be coloured by reminiscences from the Old Testament—the blindfolding perhaps from Isa. liii. 3 (see R.V. marg.), the smiting and spitting from *ib.* l. 6, the gibing request for a " prophecy " from 1 Kings xxii. 24 ; indeed, it is possible that this incident as a whole may be the product of pious imagination—at once a companion picture to the tradition which records the mocking of the Lord by the Roman soldiery after His condemnation by Pilate, the fulfilment of passages regarded as prophetic, and a deeper incrimination of the Jews, who it was felt, must have behaved at least as vilely towards Jesus as the Romans.

While these greater happenings were in progress, a tragic idyll was being acted out in the courtyard of the high-priest's residence (Mark xiv. 54, 66–72 ; Matt. xxvi. 58, 69–75 ; Luke xxii. 54–62 ; John xviii. 25–27). Thither Peter had followed His captive Master, not without risk to himself, the rest of the disciples having sought safety in flight ; he could do nothing, but he wished to remain as near as possible to Jesus for as long as possible. He had not always understood the Lord, and probably thought His conduct during these last days more enigmatic than ever, but of his love for his Leader there could be no doubt. When Jesus had expressed His forebodings of inconstancy on the part of the disciples, Peter had exclaimed that for his part he would follow Him wherever He might go, and Jesus' warning to him not to over-estimate his fortitude had acted like a challenge when the hour of danger came. In entering the high-priest's precincts, Peter put his head into the lion's mouth. As mischance would have it, he was recognized by one of the high-priest's maids, and rallied on being one of the Nazarene's followers ; at this sudden test his courage failed, and he denied any acquaintance with the Prisoner at the other end of the courtyard—denied it, we are told, vehemently, again and again. That he repudiated the Lord just thrice before the cock had crowed twice, thus exactly fulfilling a supposed prophecy, is no doubt a mere embellishment of popular story-telling ; a finer imaginative touch is introduced by Luke, who tells us that just as Peter was protesting yet once more against the imputation of being a Galilean, Jesus turned round and looked at him—and at that moment the cock crew, and Peter, remembering his Master's warning, struck to the heart by self-reproach, went out and wept bitterly. Doubtless the story, in its original form, goes back to Peter himself ; nor can any addition of legendary

traits either deepen or deprive it of its pathetic character. Yet if Peter's staunchness failed him at the decisive moment, he at least had shown greater loyalty than any of his fellow-disciples, and, measured by the test of motive and attempt rather than achievement, he proved that he loved his Master "more than these" (John xxi. 15).[1]

As for Jesus, the Holy One knew that the end was come—τὸ περὶ ἐμοῦ τέλος ἔχει—the earthly end beyond which He still beheld the glorious dawn of God's final Reign, to which these present sufferings of His were but the brief and inevitable prelude. Consistently as He had sought death, He must have hoped for it to come in a different form, a quick, clean finish in some stormy fray. It was not to be so, and in those drawn-out hours of agony He tasted death "for every man," many times over, knew all its sordid side, sounded the depths of anguish and humiliation. Yet we cannot doubt that in the presence of His enemies God's rod and His staff comforted the Divine Sufferer, and that even in the valley of the shadow of death He feared no evil; nor, though forsaken by all, was He alone, because the Father was with Him.

[1] Is perhaps a different interpretation of this incident admissible? Had Peter's affection betrayed him into yet another rash and impulsive act, and did he realize, when taunted with being an associate of Jesus, that he might not only be arrested himself, but compelled to give evidence against his Master? Was this the reason of his vehement denials and his disappearance into the night? We content ourselves with asking these questions, which in the nature of the case cannot be answered with any certainty.

CHAPTER XIX

APPARENT FAILURE: II

THE Sanhedrin's way was now clear. Those who controlled that assembly must have realized from the outset (1) that, greatly as they desired Jesus' death, they could only hope to bring it about through the instrumentality of the Roman authorities, and (2) that Pilate would not readily have intervened in a purely domestic dispute about the respect due to the Jewish Temple, or the attitude of any individual Jew towards the Jewish Law. A charge of blasphemy might have found the Governor very doubtfully sympathetic; it was otherwise with a charge of high treason, and Judas' opportune betrayal of his Master's messianic secret had furnished His enemies with the very material of which they were in need. Having obtained what was at least the equivalent of an admission of such a claim to messianic status from Jesus, they had now simply to hand Him over to Pilate with a formal accusation describing Him as a dangerous revolutionary engaged in subversive political propaganda, coupled with personal pretensions which, however absurd in themselves, might easily kindle a rebellion among the masses. It was specially fortunate for the Sanhedrin that the Governor, whose official residence as a rule was in the seaport of Cæsarea, had come to Jerusalem for the feast, *i.e.*, in order to be at hand in any emergency or disorder.

It has been assumed, but on insufficient grounds, that Pilate, when in Jerusalem, occupied the palace of Herod, which was situated close to the western city wall; it seems more likely that the Governor took up his quarters in the castle of Antonia, the military barracks which overlooked the Temple, particularly in view of the statement in Mark xv. 16 and Matt. xxvii. 27 that after Jesus had been sentenced by Pilate, the soldiers called together the whole band, *i.e.*, five hundred to six hundred men. Pilate's relations with the Jewish authorities had been strained ever since his appointment, all the more so because in his very first collision with them—over the affair of the silver eagles which he had attempted to bring into Jerusalem—he had been worsted; it

must have given the Sanhedrin a peculiar satisfaction to be able to utilize this notorious enemy of theirs for the execution of their scheme, and that in the name of the Roman sovereignty, which it was his business to uphold.

It is easy to understand that there should be discrepancies in the Evangelists' accounts of the proceedings before the Sanhedrin, which had been virtually conducted in private ; what is at first sight far more perplexing is the circumstance that similar discrepancies should mark their narratives of the proceedings before Pilate (Mark xv. 1*b*–15 ; Matt. xxvii. 2, 11–26 ; Luke xxiii. 1–5, 13–25 ; John xviii. 28–xix. 1), since these were, as is generally supposed, not merely public, but attended by the greatest possible publicity, and held in the presence of immense popular crowds. Why, then, should Mark's and Matthew's versions of what took place begin with a question addressed by Pilate to Jesus, without previous mention of the indictment, our knowledge of which is derived solely from Luke? Why should Matthew alone tell us of such episodes as the attempted intervention of Pilate's wife, of the Governor's publicly washing his hands in protestation of his innocence of the Lord's blood, or the cry of "the whole nation" (λαός), "His blood be on us, and on our children"? Why has Luke alone (xxiii. 6–12) any mention of Pilate's sending Jesus to be examined by Herod, and why does this Evangelist omit any reference to the mocking inflicted upon Jesus by the Roman soldiers, an incident which he transfers to the Lord's appearance before Herod? Why, in Luke, but not in Mark or Matthew, is the Lord's affirmative answer—even though it be a qualified affirmative—to the Governor's question whether He is the King of the Jews, followed by the instant dismissal of that and all other charges against the Accused? In what purport to be reports of public proceedings we should have expected greater unanimity.

The answer to these and similar questions seems to be, not that "Jesus does not appear to have been legally tried before Pilate," but that our accounts are confused and contradictory because the trial, while held in the open, had few witnesses, and those hostile to Jesus. Mark is probably correct in stating that the Council sent their Prisoner to Pilate quite early in the morning (πρωΐ), and that the crucifixion itself took place in the early forenoon ; the authorities, which had effected their capture secretly in the dead of night, had no interest in courting publicity for the subsequent stages of the tragedy. The motive with which

the Synoptists credit them (Mark xiv. 2 ; Matt. xxvi. 5 ; Luke xxii. 2)—fear of the people, anxiety lest there should be a riot—presumably swayed them until the end ; they would seek to have this case disposed of before many people were astir, and probably sent word to Pilate announcing the arrest of a dangerous rebel, pressing for an immediate hearing. So far from there being a huge popular concourse, therefore, these summary proceedings were in all likelihood not witnessed by the general public ; and our accounts of the trial are rather in the nature of guesses as to what must have happened—liberally amplified by haggadic and other secondary traditions—than first-hand reports of what actually took place. What must have happened was easy enough to guess, so far as the main fact was concerned : Jesus was crucified, as the official inscription, setting forth the cause of His condemnation, said, for having claimed to be " the King of the Jews " ; it required no great effort of intelligent reconstruction to infer that He must have been accused of this crime and found guilty in due course. Such an inference needed no eye-witness, and we incline to the view that the Gospel narratives of the trial are, in fact, inferential rather than based on direct evidence. Indeed, apart from the bare circumstance that the Lord was accused and condemned as a political pretender—and in the phrase used in Luke xxiii. 2, " He alleges to be ' King Messiah,' " we seem to catch a genuine echo of the phrase likely to have been used, *malka meshiha*—these narratives abound in secondary and doubtful features, on some of which we have already touched in passing, while others will presently engage our attention.

It was probably not the whole Sanhedrin which, after its day-break consultation, took Jesus to the Governor (Mark xv. 1*b* ; Matt. xxvii. 2 ; Luke xxiii. 1 ; John xviii. 28) ; a small deputation, headed by the high-priest, would be sufficient for the end in view, and Luke's statement that " the whole company of them " went on such an errand is merely dictated by the tendency to incriminate, through its official representatives, the entire Jewish nation. The Fourth Gospel supplies a historic touch by telling us that the members of the Council did not enter into the Governor's residence, in order to avoid ritual uncleanness, which would have prevented them from eating the Passover. Pilate—no doubt because their message spoke of an urgent case of high treason—respected their religious prejudices so far as to come out to them, and the trial seems to have been held on a kind of raised

pavement (John xix. 13), where the Governor may have been in the habit of dispensing summary justice.

Doubtless the proceedings began with the reading of the formal charge or charges against the Accused, and very probably these included a false accusation of having pronounced against the payment of the Imperial taxes; there certainly had been an unsuccessful endeavour to inveigle Jesus into making such a pronouncement only a short time previously. It is at least less probable that Jesus should have answered Pilate's question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" in the words "Thou sayest," whether the correct interpretation of that phrase be a frank or a qualified admission. Had it been either, it would follow that Pilate could not have dismissed the charge, as Luke xxiii. 4 states that he did; a confessed pretender to the throne could not have been acquitted. As a matter of fact, the Prisoner's own confession was not necessary; the testimony of His accusers would have amply sufficed for a conviction. In the absence of assured knowledge of what happened, the tradition followed by all the Synoptists was probably based on the assumption that Jesus must have given the same answer to Pilate as that which He was reported to have returned to Caiaphas. It is perhaps more likely that He answered nothing at all to a charge which, *in the sense in which it was made*, was quite untrue, and that His silence was interpreted as equivalent to an admission. The Fourth Evangelist is conscious of the improbability involved in the bare formula "Thou sayest," and accordingly places on the lips of our Lord the spiritualizing explanation, "My Kingdom is not of this world"; but this, together with the whole ensuing conversation between Jesus and the Governor, is the Evangelist's own free composition, and quite inappropriate to the circumstances. In any case it is plain that if Jesus had made even a hesitating admission of His claim to kingship, before a tribunal where that claim could be understood only in a political sense, Pilate would not have troubled himself to ask Him if He had nothing to say in respect of the other counts in His prosecutors' indictment; the capital charge deemed established out of the Prisoner's own mouth, it would have been mere waste of time to invite a statement on other, minor points.

But now we must turn to a feature of the greatest interest in the Gospel narratives of the trial—the Governor's alleged extreme reluctance to find Jesus guilty, and his reiterated attempts to save Him from death. Such, the Evangelists tell us, was the eagerness of this Roman official, with his reputation for anything but

clemency, to acquit or release the Accused that he resorted to expedient after expedient to accomplish this object, constituting himself *de facto* counsel for the defence, trying to change the venue of the trial, appealing to the mob's supposed partiality for "their king," seeking to avail himself of a custom of granting an amnesty to a prisoner. We have to ask ourselves whether there is any foundation for a tradition which seems to run counter to all historical probability as well as to what we know of the Procurator's character.

Certainly we know that Matthew carries the attempt to represent Pilate as disposed in the Lord's favour to lengths which give pause even to conservative scholars. To say nothing of the message of Pilate's wife, who begs him to "have nothing to do with that righteous man," on whose account she has suffered many things in a dream, we are to believe that this heathen administrator not merely performed the typically Jewish rite of washing his hands in token of innocence (*cf.* Deut. xxi. 6, 7; Ps. xxvi. 6, lxxiii. 13), but that he borrowed his language, in repudiating responsibility, from the Old Testament (*cf.* 2 Sam. iii. 28). But dismissing such incidents as haggadic embellishments, and marking with a query the very detailed address of Pilate to "the chief priests and the rulers and the [*sc.* Jewish] nation" (τὸν λαόν) which is peculiar to Luke xxiii. 13–15, we shall still be faced with the question whether the Governor was *a priori* likely to be disinclined to grant the Sanhedrin's evident desire for a capital sentence. Let it be granted that there was a strong tendency in the early Christian Church to place the whole guilt of the Lord's death on the Jews, and to exculpate the Roman authorities proportionately: we shall have occasion to see how far that tendency was carried. Nevertheless, due allowance being made for that motive in our narratives, it can hardly be supposed that Pilate was anything but the unwilling accomplice of the Sanhedrin's plot. There was no love lost between him and the Council, and a demonstration of loyalty to Cæsar from such a quarter was too unconvincing in itself not to arouse his suspicion of an intrigue. The Accused, too, in His peasant's garb, looked nothing less than the dangerous political conspirator or claimant to the Jewish throne the Sanhedrin's urgent message had led him to expect; he knew all about the type of nationalist firebrands who made the life of the administrator burdensome, and this Man obviously was not of that calibre. An intelligent official, starting with a considerable measure of distrust towards the people who now came forward as the prosecution, could hardly

help feeling that they were attempting to use him and the power he wielded for their own ends, and this alone would dispose him to refuse their request if possible. Had Jesus but denied the accusation, Pilate might have dismissed it scornfully as absurd on the face of it—as, indeed, it was. But if Jesus did not enter a denial, not even when appealed to, what could Pilate do save to find Him guilty, even though he were unconvinced himself? And Jesus probably did not deny the indictment, if for no other reason, yet for this, that He wanted to die. Such obstinate silence might first of all puzzle Pilate ; it would end by annoying him : if the Prisoner did not wish to save Himself by repudiating this made-up charge, then neither could he, Pilate, save Him—besides, why should he trouble himself about a miserable Jew, of whom His own people were evidently anxious to be rid? If he showed a momentary hesitation, such a remark from the accusers as is reported by the Fourth Evangelist (John xix. 12)—" If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend "—would quickly turn the balance, and make him give the desired judgment, viz., crucifixion after scourging.

It is, however, possible that Luke has preserved a detail belonging to history when he tells us that, on hearing that Jesus was a Galilean, Pilate tried to shift the responsibility from his own shoulders to those of Herod Antipas, who was at that time making a stay in Jerusalem. The incident (Luke xxiii. 6–12) is not otherwise attested, but in itself it offers no difficulty to belief. If Herod was paying a visit to the capital, his was certainly the competent authority for dealing with one of his subjects, and the acknowledgment of his jurisdiction by the Roman Governor was at once a compliment the tetrarch was likely to appreciate, and offered Pilate a way out of a situation he did not like. Herod, however, the tradition goes, while pleased to have the opportunity of seeing Jesus, of whom he had heard so much (*cf.* Mark vi. 14 ; Luke xiii. 31), was unable to elicit any answer from Him, and sent Him back to Pilate, clad in a gorgeous robe, after having, together with his soldiers, subjected Him to mockery. In the Sinaitic Syriac, Luke xxiii. 10–12, which includes the incident of the mocking of Jesus by the soldiers and His being arrayed in a bright robe, is omitted ; this feature was probably transferred to the Herod episode from its original place, viz., after sentence had been given by Pilate (*cf.* Mark xv. 16–19 ; Matt. xxvii. 27–30).[1] In the apocryphal Gospel of Peter it is Herod who condemns Jesus to death. As a matter of fact, " that fox " was probably just as

[1] See Note F, on p. 363.

pleased to have his troublesome subject disposed of by the Roman Governor as Pilate would have been to escape a distasteful responsibility; the wily tetrarch, in declining the exercise of his sovereign rights, returned alike the compliment and the Prisoner to Pilate, doubtless to the latter's disappointment.

Before, however, the Governor sentenced Jesus to be crucified, we read of still another incident or interlude, mentioned not in one Gospel but in all (Mark xv. 6–15; Matt. xxvii. 15–26; Luke xxiii. 13–25; John xviii. 39, 40), which at the moment made it seem possible that the Lord might yet escape His enemies' machinations. It was usual, so we are told, for the Governor to grant a free pardon each year at the Passover to some prisoner for whose release the people petitioned; just at that juncture a multitude arrived to claim their annual privilege, and Pilate, convinced that the Sanhedrin were actuated by malice against Jesus, attempted to play off the populace against the Jewish authorities, by himself suggesting that if the people wished it he would set the so-called King of the Jews at liberty. The chief priests and elders saw their scheme in danger of miscarrying, and incited the mob to ask, instead, for the release of a notorious murderer, one Barabbas, and to join with them in the cry for the crucifixion of Jesus; and they proved completely successful in working upon the feelings of the crowd, who shouted for the Lord's blood in a fury of insane hatred. Baffled by the unexpected demand for the release of a bandit like Barabbas, and apparently willing to grant a similar favour to Jesus, if only the people would express a desire for such an act of clemency, the Governor is said to have asked what they wished him to do with their alleged King, only to be met with renewed shouts of "Crucify Him!" In the end, after further unsuccessful pleading on the Accused's behalf, asking what evil He had done, and even offering as a compromise that He would have Jesus scourged and let Him go, Pilate, finding the mob determined, is said to have submitted to their dictation, to have set Barabbas free, and to have delivered Jesus over "to their will" (Luke xxiii. 25), without even pronouncing any formal verdict of guilty on Him. So far do the Evangelists carry their endeavour to exculpate Pilate and throw the whole odium of the crucifixion upon the Jews, that according to Matt. xxvii. 24 the Governor told the Jews to "see to it," thus by implication handing over the execution of Jesus to them. Similarly, Luke xxiv. 20 states explicitly the belief that it was the chief priests and rulers who had "crucified Him." Both in the Sinaitic Syriac and in D, Matt. xxvii. 26

reads to the effect that Pilate delivered Jesus *unto them, i.e.*, the Jews, and D actually continues, "*that they should crucify Him*"; that the Governor handed Jesus over "*unto them*," *i.e.*, the Jews, is also the reading of Mark xv. 15 given by the Sinaitic Syriac, and many Latin manuscripts support D's version of Matt. xxvii. 26, which assigns the actual crucifixion of the Lord to the Jewish authorities.

These and similar touches, it is safe to say, are mere by-products of the anti-Jewish polemic which flourished in the early Church; Pilate's persistent pleading on behalf of Jesus, his omission to pronounce the fatal sentence, belong as little to the region of fact as his handing the Prisoner over to the Jews to put Him to death. But what are we to say to the whole episode which centres in the people's choice between Jesus and Barabbas? Although found in all four Gospels, it seems to bear the marks of legend rather than history. There is no support whatever for this tradition of a yearly amnesty being granted by the Governor to a prisoner chosen by the people; if such a custom had been in existence, it would have been a strange coincidence for the people to come up to make their petition just as the trial of Jesus was in progress, and a still stranger procedure for the trial to come to a standstill while this matter was being debated. Granting these improbabilities, however, it would have been most unlikely for Pilate to take the initiative, and to offer to release Jesus; and again, had he done this, one does not see how the members of the Sanhedrin, taken aback by such an unexpected move, could have then and there prevailed upon the people, not merely to demand liberty for Barabbas, but to shout for the crucifixion of Jesus, against whom the multitudes could have had no special bias. In the latter detail we see merely the Evangelists' determination to make all the Jews appear in the most odious light possible, obsessed with a blind and baseless malice against the Saviour. That Pilate should have had no choice but to give in to this insensate clamour, with a garrison at his disposal for the suppression of disorder, is another quite unlikely trait in a narrative which it is impossible to accept as history.

It has been tentatively suggested that possibly somewhere about the same period some prisoner was released on the application of influential people; that it was said by Christians afterwards that this person was set at liberty in spite of his notorious guilt, because his compatriots interceded for him, but that Jesus was condemned to death, in spite of His obvious innocence; and that as the tale circulated, it came to be assumed

that the two incidents happened simultaneously, or stood in some connection. That may or may not be a true guess—it is, of course, nothing more; in any case the story of Barabbas as it stands is too improbable for credence. So far from the trial being held in the presence of a vast multitude clamouring for the release of this or the crucifixion of that prisoner, it is, as we saw, most likely that at that early hour—perhaps seven in the morning—the case against Jesus was heard and the death sentence passed with few if any members of the general public present as spectators.

This view as regards the comparative absence of witnesses seems to be supported by the Evangelists' accounts of the scenes which followed the trial itself, viz., the scourging and derision of the Lord by the Roman soldiers (Mark xv. 16–20; Matt. xxvii. 27–31; John xix. 1–3). The scourging of a condemned prisoner, according to Roman usage, took place in public, immediately after sentence of death had been pronounced, and was in turn immediately followed by the execution itself. So savage was this form of punishment, so terrible the injuries inflicted by the thongs weighted with pieces of lead or iron, and attached to a short wooden handle, that it was not a rare thing for prisoners to die under the *flagellum*. Yet of this scene, which must have made an indelible impression on any eye-witness, the Evangelists not only make but the most perfunctory mention, dismissing it literally in a word, but that word, strangely enough, in Mark, Matthew, and the Fourth Gospel alike, is in a form which suggests—what is, of course, out of the question—that Pilate himself executed this part of the sentence. "Jesus he delivered, having scourged (φραγελλώσας) [Him], that He might be crucified," is the reading both of Mark and Matthew, while the Fourth Evangelist states as unambiguously, "Then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him" (ἐμαστίγωσε). That the Roman Governor did not perform the part of the executioner is obvious; what should be equally obvious, on reflection, is that accounts which convey the contrary impression are not based on the report of eye-witnesses; Luke, indeed, omits any mention of this public incident, which in the other Gospels is only just referred to, and that in so inaccurate a form. It looks as if Mark, Matthew, and John had mentioned the scourging only as an afterthought, as something which must have happened, and no doubt did happen, but of which they had no first-hand testimony.

In striking contrast to this bare allusion to what must have

been a moving and unforgettable scene to anyone who had witnessed it, is the Evangelists' description of the further ill-treatment and derision of the Lord by Pilate's garrison after the scourging. He is taken away into the inner barrack-yard (Mark xv. 16), the whole cohort is called together to mock the unfortunate Prisoner, who is subjected to brutal jesting and indignities. The soldiers strip Him, and dress Him in one of their scarlet military cloaks, place a crown of plaited thorns on His head, kneel to Him and offer Him mock homage as King of the Jews, beat Him about the head with a stick, and spit on Him ; then, when they have tired of their sport, they take off the cloak and reclothe Him in His own garments, whereupon they lead Him off to execution. The question at once arises whence the Evangelists, or their sources, could have derived this circumstantial account of a scene to which, *ex hypothesi*, the public did not have access ; and, in the absence of any satisfactory answer to this query, we have to ask ourselves whether such an incident really took place. Luke deliberately keeps silence on it, having already introduced the *motif* of the Lord's derision and His being arrayed in a quasi-royal robe in connection with His appearance before Herod. The spitting is a typically Oriental form of insult (*cf.* Job xxx. 10), less likely to be resorted to by Roman soldiers than by Jewish enemies of Jesus ; the soldiers seem merely to repeat the act already ascribed to the Sanhedrin or the satellites of the high-priest (Mark xiv. 65 ; Matt. xxvi. 67). Again, when we read that the troopers smote the Victim's head with a reed, one suspects the influence of Mic. v. 1, " They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek " ; the passage was messianically interpreted, and as a prophecy required fulfilment. The statement peculiar to Matthew, that the tormentors of Jesus placed a reed in the thorn-crowned Saviour's hand as a mock sceptre, is altogether incredible, since its effect is to make the Lord an active participant in this tragi-comedy of kingship.

But it is also conceivable that this episode may have been imported into the Gospel narratives from an extraneous quarter. From a passage in Philo (*In Flaccum*, 6), it appears that when the young Herod Agrippa was made king of Judæa (*cf.* Acts xii. 1–23) by the successive decrees of Caligula and Claudius, the Jewish populace in Alexandria held a mock procession in which a fool called Carabas was invested with the royal purple and paraded publicly amid jeers. When it is remembered that this incident took place within a few years of the crucifixion, and having regard to the ease with which popular tradition transfers

to one individual an anecdote told about another, we can see a possible source of this tale of a derisive homage paid to a so-called " king of the Jews." Yet another theory connects the mocking of Jesus by Pilate's soldiers with certain Saturnalian rites celebrated all over the near East, in the course of which " a condemned prisoner was arrayed in royal attire, only in the end to be stripped of his borrowed finery, scourged, and hanged or crucified." Those who feel the difficulties inherent in the episode as we read it in the Gospels—especially in view of the non-public nature of the proceedings ascribed to the soldiers—will not dismiss the possibility that the tradition may have originated in some such manner.

In any case, if we accept Mark's statement (Mark xv. 25), which is to the effect that the crucifixion took place at nine in the morning, the interval between Pilate's sentence and its execution was of the briefest. The Fourth Evangelist, it is true, states (John xix. 14) that the Governor's judgment was not pronounced until about noon,[1] but Mark's is not only the earlier but the likelier tradition.

Crucifixion was a punishment reserved for common felons, slaves, and robbers, and was meant to be particularly dishonouring, as it was particularly barbarous. The word which we render by " cross " signified originally simply an upright stake, which was driven into the ground, and to which the condemned criminal was nailed by his hands and sometimes, though not always, by his feet. The later Roman custom was to fix a transom or crossbeam to this stake, and to extend the victim's arms along the former ; it was usual for the condemned man to carry this crossbeam to the place of execution, his pace quickened by the whip. In the Synoptics we read that Jesus carried the cross, *i.e.*, the whole instrument of execution, which must have been a substantial burden ; whether the crossbeam only is meant, as seems more likely, we cannot determine. Arrived at his destination, the victim was stripped of his clothes, which fell to the executioners, and made to lie down with his back to the crossbeam, to which his hands were made fast either by nails or cords ; the crossbeam was then fastened to the upright stake, to which the feet were either nailed or lashed, while the weight of the body was sustained by a peg which passed between the legs. A man might linger on the cross for days ; death would be the result of extreme pain, loss of blood, intolerable thirst, the difficulties of breathing

[1] Weymouth translates this by " about six o'clock in the morning."

in so unnatural a position, hemorrhage, syncope of the heart, or it might be accelerated by the executioners, who would despatch the sufferer by beating the life out of him with mallets—the so-called *crurifragium*—or, if they were more mercifully disposed, by a lance-thrust. It was not usual for the cross to be any great height; it fulfilled its purpose if the victim's feet did not touch the ground.

In turning to the final scene of all (Mark xv. 20*b*–41; Matt. xxvii. 31*b*–56; Luke xxiii. 26–49; John xix. 17–30), we shall have to bear two facts steadily in mind. The first is this, that in the years which elapsed between the crucifixion of the Lord and the composition of the Gospels the early Church read the story of the Passion in the Old Testament—in the prophecies and psalms, which Christians applied to, and found fulfilled in, the sufferings of their Saviour. By the time the tradition crystallized and began to be written down, it was firmly believed that these Old Testament passages, viewed as predictions, had one and all found their fulfilment in the actual circumstances attending the arrest, the trial, and death of Jesus; so that we are able to trace detail after detail in the story of the Passion back to the 22nd or the 31st, the 38th or 69th Psalm, with now a recollection from this and now from that one of Israel's ancient seers. That, even apart from such scriptural reminiscences, pious imagination should have played round this closing phase from an early time, adding all manner of embellishments, is easily understood.

But in the second place it will be well for us to keep sight of the fact that the actual, unadorned circumstances of the Lord's death were far more tragic than the secondary features with which we find them adorned in the Gospels. Where, *e.g.*, Luke tells us that "there followed Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him" (xxiii. 27), and, in direct quotation from Ps. xxxviii. 11, that "all His acquaintance . . . stood afar off" (xxiii. 49), the truth is probably that there were no sympathizers weeping for the Son of God as He went to His death, and that He was denied the comfort of knowing any of His intimates were near Him during the hours of atrocious torture; for the disciples were fled, and the detail about the lamenting daughters of Jerusalem, and Jesus addressing them on the way, belongs plainly to the poetry of religion rather than to history. The Fourth Gospel alone speaks of the Mother of the Lord, together with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene, and the unnamed beloved disciple, being present at the crucifixion;

the oldest tradition would not have omitted to mention so touching a fact as the Saviour's Mother agonizing for her Son, had such a fact been known, and the Fourth Evangelist's statement that she and the unnamed disciple stood at the foot of the cross, however tenderly imagined, is entirely improbable. We cannot think that the soldiers would have allowed the general public within the immediate proximity of the place of execution, which, if not enclosed, would be strictly guarded, if only in order to prevent attempts at interference or other irregularities.

On whose testimony, then, did the original reports of the crucifixion rest? There can be little doubt that these eye-witnesses were the women—three of whom are mentioned by name (Mark xv. 40, 41; Matt. xxvii. 55, 56)—who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and were evidently among His most devoted adherents. They had, of course, not been present at the arrest the previous night, nor had they taken part in the disciples' flight; doubtless they had learnt of the catastrophe within a very short time from its occurrence, and with touching loyalty determined to see the tragedy out, helpless as they were to prevent it. But at best, we must recollect, and indeed are distinctly told, that they could only be lookers-on from a distance; that they would be able to hear any words spoken by Jesus, or by those in the immediate vicinity of the cross, is extremely unlikely.

The identity of the place of execution, a little eminence called Golgotha, *i.e.*, the Skull, probably from the formation of the ground, can no longer be determined; on the way thither it seems that Jesus, physically exhausted by the events of the last twelve hours, and especially by the barbarous scourging, broke down under the weight of the cross, and that the soldiers compelled a passer-by, one Simon of Cyrene, who was on his way from the field—*i.e.*, going into the city—to carry it instead (Mark xv. 21; Matt. xxvii. 32; Luke xxiii. 26). This Simon may either have been a visitor to the Feast, hailing from Cyrene in North Africa, or a former inhabitant of that town who had settled in Jerusalem, and in the latter case the field from which he came may have been his own; if we are to understand Mark's phrase to mean that he was just returning from work in the field, that would prove conclusively that the day of the crucifixion cannot have been the First Day of the Feast, which ranked as a Sabbath. He is spoken of as the father of Alexander and Rufus, who evidently were well known in the community for which Mark wrote his Gospel.

It is a significant circumstance that even on such a simple detail as the inscription on the cross, which declared the crime of

which Jesus had been found guilty, we have no agreement between our accounts: where Mark xv. 26 reports "The King of the Jews," Matt. xxvii. 37 has "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," Luke xxiii. 38, "This is the King of the Jews," and John xix. 19, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," adding that it was set forth in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The differences are immaterial; but that our four Gospels should give us four different versions of the *titulus*, which was there for all men to read, speaks for itself. A great many details said to have attended the Passion are set down by the Evangelists, but it is gravely doubtful whether we know very much more with absolute certainty than that the Holy One, having been nailed to the cross, succumbed to the torture more quickly than victims usually did, after suffering but a few hours; nor, after all, can any added features, whether historical or legendary, enhance the pathos of that simple fact.

Among the various details which compose our narratives we have already glanced at Luke's statement that "all the acquaintance" of the Lord "stood afar off, seeing these things," which is simply a reminiscence of Ps. xxxviii. 11, "My lovers and my friends stood aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stood afar off"; and at the Johannine account of the Lord's Mother and His beloved disciple standing close to the cross, Jesus giving His Mother into the disciple's care, an incident which is the creation of a poet. There is little reason for doubting that together with Jesus two malefactors were crucified, and it may well be true that these abandoned characters found some base comfort in jeering at their guiltless Companion in misfortune; but that one of them rebuked the other for railing at One who had done nothing amiss, and prayed Jesus to remember him when He should come in His Kingdom, receiving the assurance that he should that day be with Him in Paradise, is a secondary feature added to the original tradition in Luke's Gospel alone. Even in the simultaneous crucifixion of the Saviour with the two robbers, early Christian piety saw a fulfilment of the prophecy, "He was reckoned with the transgressors" (Mark xv. 28; *cf.* Isa. liii. 12), and it has accordingly been suggested—though, as we think, on insufficient grounds—that it was the supposed prophecy which gave rise to the story. Again, it is probably true that Jesus was offered wine mingled with myrrh (Mark xv. 23), and that He declined this narcotic; there is at any rate a rabbinical tradition to the effect that it was a humane custom of the ladies of Jerusalem to prepare such a drink for condemned

criminals, in order to induce stupefaction and insensibility, and we can understand Jesus, on the contrary, desiring to retain full clearness of mind to the very last. But when we turn from Mark's version of this incident to Matthew's, the wine mingled with myrrh has become wine mingled with gall (Matt. xxvii. 34), the humane intention disappearing, and the cause of the alteration is the Evangelist's desire to show the fulfilment of the words of Ps. lxix. 21, "They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." The same passage probably inspired the story that after Jesus had cried out, someone filled a sponge with vinegar, and brought it to His mouth (Mark xv. 36; Matt. xxvii. 48; John xix. 29). So also as regards the incident of the executioners casting lots for the Lord's garments: such a division of a condemned man's clothes may well have been customary, but the detail is mentioned by all four Evangelists solely because it recalled the words in Ps. xxii. 18, "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots," though it seems gratuitous to assume that the story, which in itself is wholly credible, owes its origin to a verse which was regarded as prophetic, and therefore as certain to have been fulfilled.

While the crucifixion was in progress, we are told, the dying Saviour was mocked and jeered at by the passers-by, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, the rulers and soldiers. Once more He was taunted with what His enemies regarded as the blasphemous boast that He would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days; His very helplessness was flung at Him as a mocking challenge, if He were indeed the King of Israel, to come down from the cross and save Himself. It is likely enough that some of the coarser spirits among His adversaries indulged their spite by such taunts and abuse; but the form is so closely modelled on Old Testament passages as to render it certain that tradition dealt very freely with the actual facts. Thus the reference to the callous passers-by is clearly based on the famous cry in Lam. i. 12, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." All we read about the cruel mockings, the derisive wagging of the head, the jeers at the Victim's vain trust in God—proved vain by God's non-intervention—is taken bodily from the 22nd Psalm: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, Commit thyself unto the Lord; let Him deliver him: let Him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in Him."

But if this particular psalm is seen to have dominated the imagination of the early Christians in its play round the Passion, colouring and in part shaping their narratives of that supreme event, and when we remember that it is this same psalm which begins with the words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me," the question arises, unwelcome but not to be put by, whether we can be altogether sure that Jesus uttered these words from the cross. Let it be said at once that if our blessed Lord did so quote the psalmist, this would not in the least prove that He regarded Himself in that hour as forsaken by His Father; for the same mind which recollected that opening phrase, would also recollect that the old writer found his forsakenness a mere illusion, and recovered a note of sublime and joyful confidence, which may have cheered Him in His sufferings: "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath He hid His face from him, but when he cried unto Him, He heard."[1] But the doubt remains whether the quotation did not simply strike Mark, and Matthew after him, as singularly apposite to the occasion—though Luke and the Fourth Evangelist evidently did not think so—and whether any friendly witness was sufficiently near to the cross to have heard any articulate words used by Jesus. This doubt is increased by the fact that only the Hebrew form of the quotation, as used by Matthew, in which the invocation of God is "Eli," could have readily given rise to the alleged misunderstanding that the Divine Sufferer was calling upon Elijah (Mark xv. 35; Matt. xxvii. 47), while such an impression would not have arisen from the Aramaic form "Eloi," which appears in Mark, and was in fact the form which Jesus was far more likely to use.

We incline, not without reluctance, to the view that we have in this cry from the depths an attempt of early Christian piety to read what was passing in the martyred Master's breast, rather than any actual utterance which came from His lips; while the sequel—the supposed misunderstanding of the phrase on the part of some of the bystanders as a call on Elijah—is only an afterthought or after-development. It is as certain as anything can be that a space was cleared for the carrying-out of the sentence, and that within that space no casual bystanders would be permitted; none but Roman soldiers were near, and the idea

[1] It is a pleasure to find that this is the view taken by a writer so little given to sentiment as Loisy, who writes: "Cette plainte n'était pas celle d'un révolté ou d'un désespéré, c'était, comme dans le psaume, celle du juste souffrant, et assuré quand même de l'amour et de la protection que lui garde jusque dans la mort Dieu de toute sainteté. Les premiers mots du psaume devaient représenter le morceau entier" (*L'Evangile selon Marc*, p. 468).

that any of these knew about the *rôle* which Jewish messianic expectation assigned to Elijah may be dismissed.

It is significant that Luke, using that freedom of treating history which is so perplexing to us, with our different outlook, substitutes for the exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"—which he found in Mark, but did not like—another, and to his mind more suitable, recollection from the Psalms, viz., "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Ps. xxxi. 5); while the Fourth Evangelist rejects both, in favour of the majestic phrase, "It is finished": nor is any one of these likely to be more authentic than the others. All we know for certain is that Jesus, having endured to the uttermost for some six hours of unspeakable agony, uttered a loud cry, and gave up the ghost; neither dare we intrude upon that tragic fact with any conjectures of our own as to the thoughts which may have passed through His mind in those closing moments of His earthly life. In suggesting His last words, our Evangelists strike three chords which, taken together, probably come as near to the truth as it is possible to do.

It was, as we already said, inevitable that from the first there should have grown up round the Saviour's death all manner of traditions which, without being historical, bear eloquent testimony to the love and veneration with which the earliest generations of Christians regarded Jesus. No doubt it is not a literal fact that the Roman centurion who superintended the crucifixion exclaimed, when the Victim yielded up His spirit, "Truly, this Man was the Son of God" (Mark xv. 39; Matt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47, "Certainly this was a righteous man"). Nothing had happened to produce such a sudden conviction, or to lead up to so momentous a declaration; but the piety of believers felt that no one could have witnessed that passing without being stirred to confess the majesty of that great Sufferer, and it pleased the Church to represent the gentiles, here personified in a rude soldier, as readier to acknowledge the Divinity of the Lord than His own countrymen, the Jews. "Son of God," when Mark wrote, was already a technical theological term, whereas the centurion was unlikely to know anything about Jesus save that He had somehow claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Again, there is nothing surprising in the description given by the Synoptists (Mark xv. 33; Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44) of the three hours' darkness which from noon onwards, and until

the close of the Saviour's agony, covered "all the earth"; we have here not only a reminiscence of Amos viii. 9, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day," but an instance, above all, of that most touching and universal tendency of man to imagine nature in sympathy with his sorrows. Especially is it in the fates of great men that popular imagination loves to fancy nature participating; thus Virgil, writing shortly after Cæsar's death, speaks of a solar eclipse as having accompanied that event, though such an obscuration at that juncture is unknown to astronomy. Matthew adds that when Jesus died the earth shook, rocks were rent, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised, and coming forth out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered into the holy city, and appeared to many (xxvii. 52, 53). It is enough to say that if such preternatural events had happened it would not have been left to one single writer to record them, nor would such tremendous phenomena have produced no impression whatever on the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had witnessed them. Of purely symbolical import is the story (Mark xv. 38; Matt. xxvii. 51; Luke xxiii. 45) that as Jesus drew His last breath the veil of the Temple, which was hung before the entrance of the Holy of Holies, was rent from top to bottom; that was merely a picturesque representation of the thought which we find expressed in Heb. vi. 19, ix. 7, 8, x. 19, viz., that by the blood of Jesus the believer has access to the holy place, passing within the veil, to God Himself.

To a different class of legendary accretions belongs Luke's statement (xxiii. 48) that all the multitudes which had come to see the execution returned from the spectacle smiting their breasts, *i.e.*, in token of remorse, haunted by a feeling that by allowing this crime to be committed they had forfeited their salvation, and weighed down by forebodings of the consequences which must befall them. We know that in the view of the Christian Church the whole Jewish nation shared in the guilt of the Saviour's judicial murder, and Luke, poetically re-creating the situation as he envisaged it, beholds all the crowd seized with a realization of what they had collectively done, and a certain fearful looking for judgment. But the facts were otherwise; we may feel sure that those Jews who witnessed the crucifixion were for the most part either apathetic or more probably satisfied on the whole that justice had been meted out to a troublesome agitator, who had also—so they now learned for the first time—

been a messianic pretender. As for bringing about His fate, they had no share in that exploit or crime, and were quite free from self-accusations which as a matter of fact they were not called upon to feel. This violent, shameful death of the Son of God "was nothing to them that passed by": that was its awfulness—the atmosphere of callous indifference, dispassionate cruelty, in which the Holy One agonized and died.

A highly original addition to the Passion narrative is made by the Fourth Evangelist, who tells us (John xix. 31–37) that the Jews, in view of the nearness of the Sabbath, and in order to comply with the Mosaic law, which forbade leaving the body of one who had been hanged exposed all night (Deut. xxi. 23), applied to Pilate to have Jesus and His fellow-victims despatched by what appears to have been the common method, viz., fracturing their legs with iron truncheons or mallets. The executioners duly did this in the case of the two robbers, but not in that of Jesus, as they found Him already dead. Thus, the Fourth Evangelist concludes, the scripture was fulfilled which says, "A bone of him"—viz., the paschal lamb—"shall not be broken" (Exod. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12). It is easy to see how, once the idea of indentifying Jesus with the Passover sacrifice (*cf.* 1 Cor. v. 7) had taken root, such a detail would be invented: if Jesus was the Paschal Lamb, then His bones *could* not have been broken, and therefore were not.

But this is not all: one of the soldiers, the Evangelist (or his editor) says, thrust his spear in the dead Saviour's side, "and straightway there came out blood and water." So important is this detail deemed that the writer invokes for it the evidence of an eye-witness, and declares his knowledge of its truth. Nevertheless, the flowing of blood and water from a body so recently dead is physiologically impossible, except on the supposition that in this instance a physiological miracle took place. The purpose with which this detail is set down is a doctrinal purpose—and the writer himself makes this clear by actually stating it—viz., "that ye also may believe." What is it that he wishes his readers to believe? As the blood of Christ stands for the sacrament of the communion, so water is the symbol of baptism; and the issuing of blood and water from the wound in the side of the crucified Lord symbolically represents the two great Christian sacraments. Doubtless it was the writer's theological object—viz., to awaken belief in the necessity and efficacy of baptism and communion (*cf.* 1 John v. 6)—which accounts for his insertion of this otherwise unattested portent.

What remains, then, as the credible core or residue of fact after this examination—a far from grateful task—of the Gospel narratives of the Passion? There remains the name of the place of crucifixion, Golgotha, though we cannot identify that most sacred spot on earth; the incident of the procession meeting Simon of Cyrene, and compelling him to carry the Master's cross; probably the humane offer to the Lord of a cup of medicated wine as an anæsthetic, and His refusal to drink it; the nature of the inscription on the cross, showing that Jesus was condemned to death on account of His misinterpreted claim to the messianic office; the crucifixion itself; the circumstance that there were with Him two others, who suffered as common malefactors; the unsympathetic comments of some of the spectators; the presence of some women disciples who watched the sad scene from afar; the division of His garments among the executioners; finally, the loud cry of pain with which He breathed His last.

Thus the dimensions of what we may regard as reasonably certain seem to have shrunk to little; yet beside the pathos of the one central fact—Christ Crucified—we may well feel that all the traits added by pious legend are dwarfed into insignificance. They are like the wreaths and garlands hung by friendly hands around some majestic monument: the garlands fade, the wreaths are blown away, but the august monument of the Cross remains, proclaiming to every age anew the mystery of love made manifest, its victory over sin and death.

And yet our simile is less than just; for these wreaths have themselves proved unfading through the centuries, and continue to shed an imperishable fragrance, making Golgotha not a place of terrors to be shunned, but a garden of the Lord, and the chosen trysting-place of the soul with her Saviour.

CHAPTER XX

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY"

THE tragedy of the cross had been consummated; reckoned by hours, the agony of the Holy One had been brief, for the cruel torture of the scourging had already exhausted His physical resources, and, early in the afternoon, death had set a term to His sufferings. Of His followers, as we saw, only a few faithful women had witnessed the final scene, and they only from a distance; as for the disciples, they had taken to flight immediately after the arrest of their Leader, and by the time the Sanhedrin foregathered at dawn to discuss what measures to take with their Captive, they were probably on their way back to Galilee, whence a short time previously they had set out for the capital with such high hopes.

That this was the course they took is not only inherently probable, but receives confirmation from Mark xiv. 28 and xvi. 7, which point to the earliest appearances of the Risen Lord having taken place in Galilee—a circumstance to which we shall have occasion to return. It is true that our Third and Fourth Gospels (Luke xxiv. 36–43; John xx. 19–29) affirm the contrary, viz., that the disciples remained in Jerusalem, but this will appear on closer inspection to be a later and less trustworthy tradition.

It should not surprise us to find the Gospel narratives of what happened after the death of Jesus in a state of bewildering confusion, disjointedness, and mutual contradiction. For those from whom the most primitive accounts of these events are derived, the days immediately following the Passion were days of extreme perturbation and nervous strain—circumstances unfavourable to clearness either of impression or recollection[1];

[1] We quote the following from a review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, July 17th, 1919, of *Légendes, Prophéties, et Superstitions de la Guerre*, by Albert Dauzat: "How difficult it is to obtain a precise account of any event, even from eye-witnesses, is shown by an anecdote given in M. Dauzat's volume. At a meeting of scientists, a squabble between two people was suddenly and unexpectedly sprung upon them by previous arrangement. The president of the meeting, under pretence of securing legal evidence, requested every one present to write a report of what had happened. Though the assembly consisted exclusively of psychologists, jurists, and doctors, only one report contained less than twenty per cent. of errors, thirteen had more than fifty per cent. of errors, and thirty-four had invented between ten and fifteen per cent. of the details. When men of science, quietly met together, can make so many errors in a single report, there can be no further surprise at the legends invented and implicitly believed in during the agitated years of war."

and between those events and the composition of our earliest Gospel more than a generation had elapsed, more than enough for oblivion and imagination to play their respective parts in giving rise to all kinds of variants. To expect coherence or consistency in stories which had originated and circulated under such conditions would be unreasonable. To discover what really happened from testimony such as we have at our disposal may prove definitely impossible; even so we are not absolved from making the attempt of seeking to establish what certainty there may be established by a sifting and comparison of our evidence.

According to Jewish law (Deut. xxi. 22, 23) the body of a criminal who had met his death by hanging had to be buried on the same day; and as the Lord's crucifixion had taken place on a Friday, and the Sabbath technically and ritually began at sundown on Friday evening, it was all the more necessary that no time should be lost between His death and His burial if the law was to be complied with in due order. The bodies of Jewish malefactors, if unclaimed by friends or relatives, were laid in a common grave by their own authorities; they could, however, be claimed, and probably as a rule were claimed, by members of their families or other friends for private burial. In the case of Jesus, we are told, a claimant came duly forward (Mark xv. 42–47; Matt. xxvii. 57–61; Luke xxiii. 50–56; John xix. 38–42); all the Gospels agree in giving his name as Joseph of Arimathæa, the Ramathaim of 1 Sam. i. 1, but in their descriptions of this personage the Evangelists go their several ways, Mark calling him "a councillor"—*i.e.*, Sanhedrist—"of honourable estate, who was looking for the Kingdom of God," Matthew "a rich man . . . who also himself was Jesus' disciple," Luke "a councillor, a good man and righteous, who also himself waited for the Kingdom of God," and the Fourth Evangelist "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews." It will be seen that those Evangelists who describe Joseph as a member of the Sanhedrin are silent as to his having been a disciple of Jesus, and those who make him a disciple know nothing of his status as a member of the Council. No doubt the discipleship of this man was assumed as an inference from the step he took; if he had asked for the Lord's body and given it burial, it was argued, he must have been an adherent of His. Mark forgets that he has made "the whole council" pass *unanimous* sentence of death upon Jesus; Luke is conscious of the contradiction, and says that Joseph had not consented to the Sanhedrin's counsel and deed.

What seems far more probable is that Joseph of Arimathæa,

in making application for the body of the Lord to be taken down from the cross and handed over to him for burial, did not act as a disciple or from motives of humanity, but rather in an official capacity, as a member of the Council, which had to deal with the matter. Had he really been a friend or admirer of Jesus, he would hardly, one imagines, have neglected the rite of anointing the body before committing it to the grave, as Mark and Luke give us to understand; or if, as has been suggested, there was not sufficient time for the performance of these offices before sunset, the women would not have concluded that it would fall to *them* to fulfil that pious rite once the Sabbath was over. The Fourth Evangelist, fully aware of the unlikelihood of such an omission on the part of a disciple, deliberately sets himself to improve on the earlier tradition, which he regards as derogatory to the dignity of the Son of God; according to him, Nicodemus, whom he had introduced in chap. iii. as a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, associates himself with Joseph in the burial, and brings with him the enormous quantity of about a hundred pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes for the anointing. His object is to show that the Lord's remains, so far from being huddled away with scant ceremony or respect, received every sign of honour and consideration; but in his eagerness he overshoots the mark.

Joseph of Arimathæa, having had his request granted by Pilate, probably carried out his official duties with all despatch, and gave Jesus the simplest burial consistent with decency. Perhaps it was already too late for the body to be taken to one of the two common graves which received the corpses of criminals; perhaps the tomb in which he placed it was simply the nearest available, and intended only as a temporary resting-place, with a view to removal after the Sabbath interval; such a possibility is hinted at in John xix. 42. When Matthew says that the tomb to which this rich man consigned the Master's body was his own property, he may have been influenced by Isa. liii. 9—which, of course, was regarded as a messianic prophecy—"And they made his grave with the rich in his death." As to the character of this grave, the Evangelists differ. Mark xv. 46 and Matt. xxvii. 60 speak of a tomb hewn out of a rock, the type of burial-place which abounded all round Jerusalem, and consisted either of a natural cave or cleft in the rocks adapted to the purpose, or an opening made in the stone in imitation of a cave. These rock-tombs, known as *kokim*, provided as a rule for from eight to thirteen bodies, which were laid on stone shelves; they were

approached by a doorway about two feet wide and four feet high, and closed by means of a large piece of rock. In Luke xxiii. 53, however, we read of a much more elaborate place of burial, viz., a tomb of hewn stone (μνῆμα λαξευτόν), being assigned to the Lord's remains; and in John xix. 20, xx. 1, this in turn becomes a grave in a garden, "a kind of mausoleum, a large chamber partly sunk in the ground, with a place for the corpse in the middle, closed by a stone which could be lifted, not rolled away" (Kirsopp Lake, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 170). Probability would certainly point to the Lord's body having been buried in a rock-sepulchre, with which the neighbourhood of Jerusalem was honeycombed, rather than in either of the other and much rarer types of tomb.

In Matthew's Gospel alone (xxvii. 62–66, xxviii. 11–15), we find a tradition to the effect that on the day following the crucifixion and burial of the Lord the chief priests and the Pharisees approached Pilate with a request that he would give orders for the tomb to be kept secure until the third day, in order to prevent the theft of the body by the disciples, lest its disappearance should be pleaded in proof of the resurrection which Jesus had predicted for Himself; with this request the Governor is said to have complied forthwith, giving them a guard of soldiers to watch by the tomb, which they sealed for greater security.

On every ground this story, together with its sequel, appears apocryphal. If Jesus had foretold His resurrection—a point to which we shall have occasion to recur—He would have done so only in the presence of the small circle of disciples who shared His messianic secret, and the Sanhedrin could have learned of the prediction only through Judas; thus there was no occasion for the Jewish authorities to anticipate the fraudulent fulfilment of a prediction by the very people to whom alone it had been made, and who by such a theft could not have deceived even themselves. But, apart from this preliminary consideration, the Sanhedrin could not have sealed the tomb on the Sabbath, and probably they could not even have had an interview with the Governor on that day without breaking the law. Moreover, when on the morning following the Sabbath the women approached the sepulchre, we read (Mark xvi. 3) that their sole concern was about rolling away the stone which closed up the entrance, while they said nothing at all about the soldiers, who would not have allowed them to enter a sealed tomb. Matthew's statement that the soldiers became as dead when the angel removed the stone, and were afterwards bribed by the Sanhedrin to tell

Pilate that the body had been stolen by the disciples while they were asleep, is utterly incredible; for, if the soldiers had been asleep, they evidently could not say who had taken the body, and since, moreover, the penalty for falling asleep while on guard was death, they were not likely so to incriminate themselves for the sake of any bribe.

Doubtless, when the early Christians began to relate the story of the empty tomb, the Jews would retort by saying that probably the disciples knew best what had become of the body; the story of the guard and seal, and the large bribe to ensure the soldiers' silence, would grow up as such tales do—not as a deliberate fabrication, but following the usual lines of development, from surmise to presumption, from presumption to rumour, from rumour to positive statement that so it had happened. The story as we read it in its full-grown form is part of an embittered controversy between Jews and Christians, in which each side was ready to believe the worst of the other, and neither was particularly careful of evidence.

In the fading light of Friday afternoon, the 14th of Nisan, the mortal remains of Jesus had been laid to rest, some of the faithful women beholding where He was laid (Mark xv. 47; Matt. xxvii. 61; Luke xxiii. 55); early on Sunday morning the tomb was found empty. On this one central fact all the Gospel narratives are agreed; but while this was the one fact which supremely mattered to the early Church—for the empty tomb afforded at any rate presumptive proof of the Lord's resurrection—it has to be admitted that in regard to almost every detail attending this incident our reports (Mark xvi. 1–8; Matt. xxviii. 1–10; Luke xxiv. 1–11; John xx. 1–18) present a state of confusion and contradiction, which at first sight is extremely baffling. We have already said that it would be unreasonable to expect such accounts as we have before us in the Gospels, written at such a distance of time from the events, to be mutually consistent; nevertheless, the mass of discrepancies that meet us surpasses expectation. On the simple theme, "The Saviour's tomb was found empty by certain women disciples early on Sunday morning," our authors, or their sources, have executed a number of variations which to the Western mind, unaccustomed to the ways of the haggadist, and his indifference to the merely "factual," are somewhat disconcerting.

Thus, as regards the time of the discovery, *Mark* tells us that it was "after sunrise"; *Matthew*, that it was "late on the

Sabbath day, as it began to dawn" ; *Luke* says "at early dawn," and the *Fourth Gospel*, "while it was yet dark."

That, of course, is a very minor discrepancy ; what is of greater importance is that while *Mark* expressly names as the discoverers of the tenantless grave three women, viz., Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, *Matthew* names two, viz., Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" ; *Luke* names three, viz., Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, "and the other women with them" ; while the *Fourth Gospel* mentions only Mary Magdalene.

When the discoverers, or discoverer, come to the tomb, they find the stone, according to *Mark*, *Luke*, and the *Fourth Evangelist*, already taken away ; in *Matthew's* narrative the stone is still there, and is rolled away before the women's eyes by an angel who descends from heaven, while the Roman soldiers are paralysed with fright.

If we ask the women's object in making this early excursion, *Mark* and *Luke* tell us that they desired to anoint the Master's body, *Matthew* that they went to see the sepulchre, while the *Fourth Gospel*, where we read it explicitly stated that the body was already anointed, mentions no object at all, but leaves us to make the not very difficult guess why a devoted adherent should wish to visit the grave which had received the remains of the beloved Teacher.

As the visitors, or visitor, drew nearer to the place of burial, they saw, according to *Mark*, a young man in white, sitting inside the tomb ; according to *Matthew*, an angel, outside the tomb ; according to *Luke*, two men inside ; according to the *Fourth Gospel*, Mary Magdalene sees two angels sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

In *Mark* and *Matthew* the women receive a message from the young man, or angel, bidding them tell the disciples—Mark adds, "and Peter"—that Jesus is going before them into Galilee, and that there they shall see Him ; in *Luke* they receive no such message, nor does Mary Magdalene in the *Fourth Gospel*, while the disciples, according to the Third and Fourth Evangelists, remain in Jerusalem, and see Jesus there.

As for this message, according to *Mark* it remained undelivered, for the women, we are told, said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid ; in *Matthew*, on the contrary, we read that the women "departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word," the implication being, of course, that the latter were still in or near the capital ; in

Luke, where the women have received no special message to the disciples, they nevertheless at once report to them what they have seen and heard, viz., the empty tomb, and the announcement made to them by the two men who had told them that Jesus was risen from the dead, in accordance with His own prediction; while in the *Fourth Gospel* Mary Magdalene, having seen the stone taken away from the tomb, informs, not the Eleven, but Peter and the unnamed disciple.

In *Mark* and *Luke* no appearance of the Risen Saviour to the women is chronicled; in *Matthew* Jesus meets them as they return from the sepulchre, and confirms the angel's message; in the *Fourth Gospel* He appears to the weeping Mary Magdalene alone.

In *Matthew* the women take hold of the Lord's feet; in the *Fourth Gospel* He bids Mary Magdalene not to touch Him, because He was not yet ascended.

Mark and *Matthew* have nothing to say of any verification of the women's discovery by the disciples; in the *Fourth Gospel*, however, Peter and the unnamed disciple run to the tomb, and vie with each other who shall arrive there first—the nameless one winning in the strange contest, but not entering the tomb, while Peter, who arrives second, enters; in *Luke*, finally, Peter goes to the tomb alone, while later in the same Gospel we read a more general statement, according to which "certain that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said." The earliest tradition, therefore, does not make Peter a witness, and in fact states that he was not told of the discovery of the empty grave, the women being too frightened to speak.

Nor, when we have compared the Gospel narratives of the finding of the empty tomb with one another, are we at the end of our long list of divergences between our witnesses, for the later Evangelists report alleged appearances of the Risen Lord's which were unknown to the more primitive tradition. Thus it is Luke alone (xxiv. 13–32) who tells us the very circumstantial story of the two disciples who on the way to the village of Emmaus fell in with a Stranger, with whom they conversed on the crucifixion of Jesus and the disappearance of His body; how the Stranger began to explain to them from the scriptures that it behoved the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into His glory; and how, later on, as He broke bread with them, their eyes were opened, and they knew even as He vanished that it had been no other than Jesus Himself. The Evangelist continues his narrative by stating (xxiv. 33–43) that these two

disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem and reported their experience to the Eleven, and, while they were yet speaking, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, showing them His hands and feet in token of His identity, bidding them handle Him, asking them for something to eat, and in fact eating a piece of broiled fish before them, to prove that He was not a ghost.

In the Fourth Gospel we have a similar story (John xx. 19–23) of Jesus appearing in the midst of the Eleven; but instead of eating with them on that occasion, He breathes upon them, imparting the Holy Spirit to them by that means, and empowering them to forgive sins. The Fourth Evangelist, however, does not introduce this incident by the episode of the Emmaus disciples, which is peculiar to Luke. On the other hand he alone (John xx. 24–29) relates the story of Thomas who, having been absent at the time of the Lord's appearance to the other disciples, expressed incredulity, and declared he would only believe if he saw and touched the print of the nails, and put his hand in the Master's wounded side; and how a week later Jesus reappeared, once more entering through closed doors, and afforded Thomas the desired proof, insomuch that he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"—thereupon being rebuked with the words, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Finally, the Fourth Gospel alone relates the story (xxi. 1–23) of the Lord's appearance at the Lake of Tiberias; of Peter's leap into the waves when he learned from the beloved disciple that it was Jesus; of the disciples' miraculous draught, under Jesus' directions, of a hundred and fifty-three fishes; of His sharing with them a meal of bread and fish on the beach; and of the rehabilitation of Peter, who is bidden to feed the Master's sheep.

All these, with one notable exception,[1] are palpably secondary traditions; it is noticeable and instructive how, in comparison with the reticence of Mark, these later narratives show a tendency to circumstantiality and amplitude of detail, and how the Risen One is ever more realistically represented, even to partaking of food with the Eleven. No doubt this tendency was the result, at least in part, of controversies which arose in the second and third generation between believers and unbelievers as to the reality of the apparitions reported to have been witnessed by the first disciples; each sceptical suggestion would provoke a more emphatic affirmation, with ever fuller and more precise particulars, the process being carried to the greatest lengths

[1] See p. 357.

by the very Evangelist who recognizes that a belief based on such ocular demonstrations is inferior to that which does not need the aid of the senses. Nevertheless, this same Evangelist, with his instinct for a dramatic climax, deliberately introduces and elaborates the story of Thomas' scepticism and subsequent conversion to belief, with the distinct doctrinal purpose of leading up to the culminating declaration of the Saviour's Godhead.

As for the stories in John xxi. of the disciples' wonderful draught of fishes, and of Peter's casting himself into the sea when he realized that it was Jesus who was standing on the beach, these seem to be derived from two Synoptic anecdotes belonging to the Galilean ministry, viz., the marvellous catch of fish related in Luke v. 4–11, and the statement in Matt. xiv. 29, where we read that "Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus." Finally, the episode of the distribution of fish and bread by the Risen Lord among the disciples on the shore of the Galilean lake is an echo, on the one hand, of Luke's account (xxiv. 41–43) of Jesus eating a piece of broiled fish before the Eleven in Jerusalem after His resurrection, and, on the other, of that lake-side eucharist, common to all the Gospels, in which also bread and fish are distributed by the Master.

Amid this mass of floating traditions, which cannot by any possibility be fitted into a consistent whole, the elucidation of solid fact seems anything but a hopeful task. And in recalling the discrepancies which pervade the narratives relating to the discovery of the empty tomb, it adds to our perplexity when we realize that St. Paul, with his continual insistence on the Resurrection, never once alludes to that discovery or to the women's testimony. Somewhere or other one would have expected the Apostle to make a reference to the events of that first Easter morn, and his complete silence on those events is not satisfactorily accounted for. When in 1 Cor. xv. 5–8 he gives an enumeration of the Risen Saviour's appearances—first to Peter, then to the Twelve, then to above five hundred brethren at once, then to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all to himself—one marvels that he should not have one word to say about the appearances to the women of which we read in Matthew and the Fourth Gospel; still more, that on no occasion does he betray any acquaintance with the women's wonderful experience when they visited the sepulchre. It may be contended that to him, who believed himself to have first-hand proof of the Lord's

risen life, the finding of the untenanted tomb was a matter of minor importance; that his assurance, and the grounds for it, were expressed in the words, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1) and needed no other confirmation; that for him the disappearance of the Saviour's body from the grave was a necessary inference from that direct knowledge. Instead of reasoning from the empty tomb to the Risen Christ, he would argue backward from the Risen Christ to the empty tomb. St. Paul did not believe in a mere psychical survival; the Resurrection, to him, meant a reunion of the soul with its body, and the transubstantiation of the latter, which would be "changed" and put on "incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 52, 53), being no longer flesh and blood, but a spiritual body. The disappearance of the Lord's mortal remains from their resting-place was no compelling proof, *per se*, of a resurrection having taken place, for there were other and far simpler explanations available; on the other hand, his vision of the Risen Christ proved to St. Paul not merely that He *was* risen, but that His grave *must* be empty.

It may be readily conceded that his own experience rendered the women's discovery and testimony negligible so far as St. Paul himself was concerned; it is not so easily explained why he should not, in dealing with what to him was the all-important topic of the Resurrection (*cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 14)—*e.g.*, in seeking to convince those Corinthians who said that "there is no resurrection from the dead" (*ib.* verse 12)—have quoted the evidence of those who had actually found Christ's grave empty when they went to visit it. Could he have resisted doing so, had he been acquainted with the tradition? And could he have failed to be so acquainted, had the tradition existed in his time? These questions receive different answers from different quarters; and it may well be that no final answer is possible, since the argument from silence seldom carries us beyond probabilities and improbabilities. Still, *this* is a silence which is unexpected, and remains unexplained.

At this point, and before we proceed further, two features presented by our problem may profitably receive attention. In the first place, we have already found, in comparing our witnesses with each other, that the later differ from the earlier ones in the greater circumstantiality and the heightened complexion of the marvels they relate. It is a sound principle in such cases to regard the simpler account as the more credible.

Fancy will ever be at work embroidering the plain material furnished by fact. We had occasion, *e.g.*, to refer to such an obviously added trait as the Fourth Evangelist's story of the hundred pounds' weight of myrrh and aloes brought by Nicodemus for the anointing and embalmment of Jesus. But let us glance at another example of this tendency to enhance the miraculous and to add heightening touches. In Mark's account, as we saw, the sepulchre is found empty, and the stone already rolled away; in Matthew, though the stone is rolled away in the women's presence by an angel, and though we should accordingly expect to be shown Jesus issuing from the tomb, the Evangelist evidently shrinks from that logical completion of the scheme, and we are told instead of the angel's saying to the women, "He is not here, for He is risen, even as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The inference here is that He was already risen before the stone was rolled away—and yet the removal of the stone could have had for its original object nothing else but to allow the re-animated body of the Saviour to issue forth. But for an explicit description of this event we have to turn to the apocryphal Gospel of Peter, where we read that the stone rolled away of itself, that two men who had descended from heaven entered the tomb, and that the soldiers beheld "three men coming out of the tomb, and two of them were supporting the third, and a cross was following them: and the heads of the two men reached to the heaven, but the head of Him who was being led away by them was higher than the heavens. And they heard a voice from heaven which said, Hast thou preached to them that are asleep? And a response was heard from the cross, Yea." It is after this, at the dawn of the Lord's day, that Mary Magdalene and other women go to the tomb to bewail Jesus, wonder who shall roll away the stone for them, find the sepulchre already opened, and in it a young man, "beautiful and clad in a most dazzling robe," who tells them that if they have come to seek Him who was crucified, "He is risen, and has gone to the place from whence He was sent." Here we can see successive legendary details being added, as our narrators move further away from the time of the actual events.

But a second feature which calls for our attention is the reiterated mention by the Evangelists of the disbelief with which the news of the discovery of the empty tomb was received—the difficulties against which belief in the Resurrection evidently had to struggle. Thus, in the appendix to Mark's Gospel (xvi. 9–20) which follows its abrupt close, "for they were afraid"—

if, indeed, this was intended as a close—we read that the apostles, "when they heard that He was alive and had been seen of her," *i.e.*, of Mary Magdalene, "disbelieved." Then, when the two disciples who had seen the Risen Lord on their way into the country reported their experience to the rest, "neither believed they them"; and when Jesus was manifested to the Eleven, He "upbraided them with their unbelief." Similarly in Matt. xxviii. 18, when the Eleven saw Jesus in Galilee, we are told that "some doubted." So again in Luke xxiv. 11 we read that the things told to the Eleven by the women "appeared in their sight as idle talk, and they disbelieved them." Once more, when the Emmaus disciples tell their Companion that the tomb indeed had been found empty, "but Him they saw not" (Luke xxiv. 24), the implication is that the empty grave was not regarded as sufficient proof of the Resurrection, whereupon Jesus upbraids them as "slow of heart to believe." And when, finally, the Risen Lord manifests Himself to the disciples, and shows them His hands and feet, the Evangelist reports that "they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered" (*ib.* verse 41), and had to have a still more indubitable demonstration!

It is evident that the amount of disbelief in the Resurrection—meaning both the story of the empty tomb and the reappearances of the Lord—which prevailed in the earliest Christian community must have been very considerable, and its character very stubborn, for it to have received such emphatic mention in the Gospels. The same impression is produced by the various anecdotes, all of which agree in one point, viz., that the Risen Jesus was not recognized by those to whom He appeared—by the Emmaus disciples, who did not realize His identity until after He had vanished (Luke xxiv. 31, 32), by Mary Magdalene, who thought Him to be the gardener (John xx. 15), by Peter, who had to be told by the nameless disciple that the Figure on the beach was the Lord (*ib.* xxi. 7).

As for the story of the women's visit to the sepulchre, and what they found there, it seems beyond doubt that it gained only gradual acceptance. Our earliest and most important witness, St. Paul, ignores it; our earliest Evangelist asserts point-blank that the women did not tell the apostles what they had seen, nor delivered the message they had received—which may be only an *ex post facto* explanation of the circumstance that such a discovery was unknown in apostolic circles; while the statement in Luke xxiv. 12 and 24 that first Peter and then "certain of them that were with us" went to verify the women's

announcement, besides directly contradicting Mark, looks too much like an afterthought.

We take it that it was the first generation of Christians which received the tradition of the empty tomb with incredulity, and that this incredulity was later on retrospectively attributed to the Eleven, who "on the third day" were not in Jerusalem, and therefore could not have been told of any discovery the women might have made, till some later time.[1]

The question inevitably arises, How is this slowness to believe, which is so marked a feature of the Resurrection narratives, to be reconciled with what we read in the Gospels of the Lord's repeated and explicit predictions of that event?

The answer appears to be (1) that the predictions in question were probably less explicit than appears from the records; and (2) that although Jesus no doubt referred to His resurrection as the indispensable preliminary to His going to heaven and returning thence, He had probably touched on that point only incidentally, and *without suggesting that He would manifest Himself to His intimates during that purely interim and passing phase.* What He had predicted with the utmost emphasis, as an event to be expected in the nearest future, was His return in glory with the clouds of heaven, accompanied by angel-hosts, to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. It was this public and world-transforming event to which His followers looked forward, not to private appearances which He had never foretold, and which consequently they did not expect. Their hopes were fixed on a glorious consummation which should vindicate their faith in Jesus' Messiahship in the sight of friend and foe; the resurrection visions were at most the prelude to that consummation, and its non-fulfilment was in all likelihood the more keenly felt.

If, now, we address ourselves once more to the story of the empty sepulchre, and try to ascertain what, if any, is the nucleus of fact beneath so much that is legendary or doubtful—what is of truth in the Gospel narratives of the women's visit to the tomb, and their discovery that the remains of Jesus had disappeared—we are confronted by a variety of possible hypotheses:

(1) Of these, we may at once put on one side the theory that Jesus had not really died on the cross, and was taken away by His disciples, or that His dead body was stolen by them, in order to produce belief in His resurrection. The "resuscitation"

[1] See p. 358.

theory lacks all support in fact, and would make Jesus a party to an odious imposture; the theft of His body would similarly, and quite inexcusably, stigmatize the disciples as deceivers—and, of course, the fact of a sepulchre being found empty was in itself no proof whatever of a miracle, but would simply have awakened a very natural suspicion of trickery. Moreover, as we have already said, such expectations as there were centred not in the Resurrection but in the Parousia.

(2) Another possible explanation might be to dismiss the accounts of the women's expedition and discovery as wholly unhistorical, a mere secondary tradition, designed to corroborate the spiritual experiences of the disciples, who felt that they had been in direct communion with their Master subsequently to His death. Such a supposition derives undoubted force from the alleged silence of the women regarding their discovery, and the unmistakable silence of the Apostle Paul on the subject of the empty grave; so drastic a denial, however, ought not to be resorted to, save in the absence of any more satisfactory explanation, and for the moment, therefore, we may hold our judgment in suspense.

(3) Or, in the third place, we may think it possible that if Joseph of Arimathæa laid the body of the Lord "in his own new tomb" (Matt. xxvii. 60), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary being there, he did so only temporarily, and had it removed as soon as the Sabbath was over—an explanation the possibility of which is hinted at in Mary Magdalene's words, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him" (John xx. 13). The recommendation of this view lies in its entire simplicity and even *a priori* probability, and we should adopt it unless we thought it possible to put forward some alternative accounting in an unforced manner for a greater number of the reported facts—for the removal of the body by Joseph of Arimathæa does not carry us a step farther than the empty grave itself, leaving all the rest of the women's reported experience legendary.

(4) We turn accordingly to a surmise[1] which, though it cannot claim to be more than a surmise, seems to possess this advantage over its rivals, that it preserves a larger and more solid stratum of fact in the Gospel narratives, without doing violence either to the facts themselves as represented or to historical probability.

The burial of the Lord's body had probably taken place in failing daylight, and with all haste, in order to comply with the

[1] See Kirsopp Lake, *op. cit.*, pp. 246 ff.

Jewish law, and so as not to violate the Sabbath, the women following at a distance, eager to observe without being observed. The remains were deposited in a rock-grave of the kind of which there were thousands in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, looking one much like any other. It would not be easy to locate and identify one such tomb among a cluster of similar ones, after a single visit, any more than it is to find any particular grave amid a number of others in a modern cemetery, after seeing it just once, even in normal light, and under normal circumstances favourable to accurate observation. But in this case the circumstances were not normal nor favourable to the women's identification of the spot; there was the dusk, the distance, the terrible emotional and nervous strain they had been undergoing since early morning, reducing them to a harrowed, overstrung condition. On the following day but one, after two miserable nights, they set out, while it was yet dark, to visit the tomb—not to embalm the body of Jesus, for they could not have removed the stone, but in obedience to a universal human instinct.[1] In the uncertain grey dawn they arrive, and make for what they think the grave which had received their dead Master. A young man stands in front of this grave; he may have seen them two days ago, he may have known them as followers of the Galilean rabbi, and guesses what they are seeking. "You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified the day before yesterday," he says; "He is not here—you are looking in the wrong place; behold"—pointing to the correct spot—"the place where they laid Him." Whereupon the women, only half understanding, but with the words "He is not here" in their ears, fled headlong, terrified at the thought of being recognized, and for the time being "said nothing to anyone"—the disciples being gone from the capital—while "they were afraid" of divulging their experience to anyone else, who might be an enemy.

Nor, if this should be an approximately accurate guess at what happened, is it difficult to form an idea of the next phase. If Jesus "was not there," if the tomb was empty, the women concluded that He was risen: which conclusion once formed, doubtless one and the other of their number, especially Mary

[1] *Cf.* the apocryphal Gospel of Peter: "And at the dawn of the Lord's day Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord, who, being afeard of the Jews because they were inflamed by anger, had not done at the sepulchre as women were wont to do over the dead and those beloved by them, took her friends with her and came to the tomb where He had been laid; and they were afraid lest the Jews should see them, and they said, Though we were not able to weep and to bewail Him in that day when he was crucified, yet now at the tomb let us do so." The apocryphal writer here seems to get very close to the truth.

Magdalene, a sensitive subject (Luke viii. 2), would have visions of the Lord, such as have gladdened the ecstasy of religious mystics throughout the centuries. The wonderful spiritual idyll which tells how, as "Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping," she saw the beloved Master (John xx. 11–17)—this priceless gem of the evangelical tradition, with its unearthly tenderness, may well go back to a first-hand statement.

The merit of Dr. Lake's conjecture is, as we began by saying, that it accounts for so many features in the earliest of our Gospel versions of this incident, and that it does so in an unforced manner. There remains, on the other side, the total silence of St. Paul on this incident; but, baffling as that silence is, we do not think that it suffices to discredit a tale which is so likely to be true in itself, and provides so probable a root for the legendary growths that have twined themselves round the story of that first Easter dawn. That the angelic message would be shaped and formulated in the light of after-events—even variously shaped to accord with various views of those after-events—is easily understood.

But what was the course which, as a matter of fact, events did take after the crucifixion? In order to obtain an answer to this query, let us look at the concluding pages of our earliest and our latest Gospel. Even a cursory examination of their contents discloses the curious fact that whereas Mark's Gospel is incomplete, the Johannine Gospel is over-complete. The genuine Mark comes to an end with the statement in chap. xvi. 8 that the women, so far from delivering the message given to them for the disciples and Peter, said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. The twelve following verses are from another, later hand, and consist of a bald summary of the appearances of the Risen Saviour, compiled from the other Gospels, as may be shown in detail. It is often supposed that the original last page of Mark's Gospel was lost or suppressed at an early age, since the Evangelist cannot have wished to close so abruptly as would be the case if the sentence recording the women's silence had been intended by him as the conclusion of his book; and though this is only hypothesis, it looks at any rate as if he had meant to chronicle an appearance of the Lord in Galilee, for this is plainly foreshadowed in the message received by the women at the sepulchre (xvi. 7; *cf.* xiv. 28).

Turning now to the Fourth Gospel, it is easy to verify the statement that this book is over-complete, just as Mark is incomplete. The Johannine writer closes his Gospel in the most

explicit and solemn fashion at chap. xx. 30, 31, after Thomas' crowning confession of the Lord's Godhead, the scene being Jerusalem; there is no mistaking the nature of those verses, or the consummate art of that swift and pregnant conclusion. Then, suddenly, the closed tale is reopened, the scene has shifted to Galilee, and we are told that "after these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias," with special emphasis on the rehabilitation of Peter—a circumstance which reminds us at once of Mark xvi. 7, "Go, tell the disciples, *and Peter*, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him." We do not assume that such instructions were given; but this supposed message clearly points to a very old and authentic tradition of the first appearances of the Risen Master having taken place in Galilee, and it is this tradition which we find, together with less historical material, embodied in what is quite plainly an appendix to the Fourth Gospel, that twenty-first chapter which was apparently added by an editor's hand. Here, in fact, we have in substance the missing end of Mark's Gospel: the disciples have returned to their former habitations, resumed their old calling as fishermen, and, while they are so engaged, Jesus appears to them.

From these data it seems possible to reconstruct the course of events somewhat as follows: After the arrest of Jesus in the mount of Olives on the 13th of Nisan, the disciples sought safety in immediate flight from Jerusalem, and returned to their own province; they knew that their Leader was lost, and—with the exception of Peter, who lingered a little while near the captive Master—thought only of making good their escape. The great adventure from which they had hoped so much had ended in cataclysm and gloom; as for themselves, there was nothing for them but to take up as best they could the threads of their former life. Yet as they went once more about their old occupations amid their old surroundings, they were pursued by memories of Him whom they had followed, whom they had loved for the grace which went forth from Him, whom they had verily believed in as the future Messiah, and who had now come to a cruel and ignominious death. They would recall the early days of His preaching; the multitudes which crowded round Him as He proclaimed the Kingdom to be at hand; the words of wisdom in which He had taught the people; the deeds of healing He had performed among them; the mission on which He had sent the Twelve, and its results, falling so far short of His expectations; the conflicts

with the religious authorities ; the waning of popular sympathy ; a growing sense of insecurity, and then the long months of exile in the far north ; an unforgettable day, when He had revealed to three of them His assured conviction that the Messiah who was to bring in the Reign of God was none other than Himself ; another occasion, near Cæsarea Philippi, when Peter, unable to contain himself, had divulged to all the rest what had been confided as a secret to himself and the sons of Zebedee ; thereafter, the brief farewell visit to Galilee, the momentous journey to Jerusalem, and all the happenings of those crowded, tragic days which lay but just behind them. As they looked back upon that closing phase, they would blame themselves for unresponsiveness, want of understanding, lack of loyalty : if the Master had only still been with them, they would gladly have expressed their sorrow, sought His pardon, assured Him of their love.

Thus Jesus was in their thoughts and on their lips, He was with them alway, a besetting Presence ; and as the days went by, first one and then another of their number—in the end most likely all at once—felt that presence so intensely that it projected itself outward, translated itself into visions, convincing them that Jesus was not really dead but risen, living a life which was flooding their own lives with a fresh vitality, setting their hearts throbbing with new hope and faith. He had burst the bands of death ; surely, then, He would return in a little while in glory, and all their dreams would yet be realized.

Then, when they met again—either in Galilee or in Jerusalem —with the women who had gone up with them and remained behind after the Lord's arrest and death, and heard from their lips the wondrous tale of the sepulchre found empty when they went to visit it, such a story could not fail still further to confirm their faith that Jesus was risen indeed. The women's testimony strengthened, but did not create, the apostles' faith, which rested on their own direct, incontrovertible consciousness of having had the Lord in their midst : doubtless it was this assurance of His continued life and power which transformed these men from the beaten fugitives who had left the environs of the capital for their distant homes, by night, in fear and trembling, into the bold heralds of the Gospel who returned to Jerusalem soon after, to preach Jesus as the Christ.

In that sense, the story of the empty tomb is a secondary tradition ; the apostles' belief in the Resurrection of the Lord arose independently of it, as the result of their second experiences in

Galilee, but was naturally reinforced by the women's narrative. Since the disciples, and perhaps especially Peter, had, as a matter of fact, first had these visions amid the familiar scenes near the Lake of Gennesareth, it is not difficult to understand how the story arose that Galilee had been indicated both by Jesus Himself and by the messenger at the sepulchre as the locality where the Risen Saviour would be seen; later on it was felt strange that Jesus should have sent the Eleven to Galilee in order to manifest Himself to them, when He might just as easily have done so in Jerusalem, and accordingly the Third and Fourth Evangelists speak of Jerusalem and its environs as the scene of His reappearances to the Eleven. Nevertheless, we have every reason to believe that the disciples' visions were seen in the Master's home-country and probably enough on the shores of the Galilean lake, that region full of living memories.[1]

Many will feel that more important than the locality where they took place is the character of the visions which so vitally affected the outlook of the disciples, and determined the course of all subsequent history—whether they were subjective or objective. To such a question, natural as it is, there appears no final answer possible. We do not doubt the possibility of an objective self-manifestation by a discarnate spirit; on the other hand, even what we should call a subjective vision may be directly caused by Divine inspiration, and if the experiences of the apostles were of this order, then we must see in them the most signal exhibition of such Divine directive energy in all the chronicles of the race. It is noteworthy that when St. Paul makes reference to his own experiences, he practises a studious reticence, going into no details, never suggesting a distinct bodily shape or outline, but using the most general term possible, viz., "the Lord was seen," ὤφθη, (1 Cor. xv. 5–8). This is the word he employs four times in succession, applying it alike to Peter's, James', the five hundred brethren's, the other apostles', and his own experience. Now the latter, if we may accept the threefold testimony of Acts (ix. 3, xxii. 6, xxvi. 13), twice placed on his own lips by the writer, is simply that of a great light from heaven which was shed round about him, and the language he uses does not suggest that the visions of the other apostles differed from his.

Naturally, in course of time, ever fresh details were added, ever greater definiteness and materiality given to these visions. When presently the Docetic heresy arose, which maintained that

[1] See Note G, on p. 363.

Jesus had never really come in the flesh, but had only had the *appearance* of a physical frame, it was the more confidently asserted on the other side that He demonstrated the possession of a concrete body after His resurrection, even to the point of showing the print of the nails, and eating solid food in the presence of His disciples. Such traits are *haggada* in the service of apologetic; what really mattered was the consciousness in the minds and hearts of His followers that the Holy One could not be holden of death, and that the grave could have no power over Him who was Himself the Lord of life.

To the first and second generation of Christians the Resurrection was of importance chiefly as the earnest of the Lord's impending return—a victory over death guaranteeing the greater, the final victory which they still expected in the immediate future. Alone of all mankind, they argued, He had not remained in the realm of Hades, awaiting the Judgment, but had gone away, ascended into heaven : from heaven He would presently come back, and in the glory of that Second Coming and the completeness of His triumph the shame of the cross would be done away. But as the years followed each other, and these hopes seemed no nearer fulfilment, as the Lord's tarrying caused some to grow faithless and others despondent, there evolved a different conception of the Parousia, which came to be identified with the Resurrection itself : the consummation, the return of Christ, was neither in the immediate nor in the remote future, but was a present spiritual fact, expressed in the words which Matthew places in the Risen Saviour's mouth, " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

And this is indeed the truth, verified all through the centuries by humble and adoring spirits, who have found in Jesus Christ, not a figure of a bygone age, but " Immanuel, God with us." We shall not seek the living among the dead, or imagine that He in whom we behold Love made manifest could end on a cross : rather were that Life and Love set free on Calvary, to become the source and inspiration of more and more abounding life, even the power of God unto salvation. In Him was life, and that life was and is the light of men ; and as many as receive Him, to them gives He the right to become children of God. He is with His own alway ; and because He lives, we, who have our deepest life in Him, shall live also. For whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away : but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever.

At a unique juncture in the world's history there appeared a unique Personage, answering the confused, half-articulate needs and strivings of humanity in a fashion too sublime for humanity's immediate understanding. While His country seethed with messianic ferment, He was altogether too great to play the part which popular imagination assigned to the Messiah. Thus He did not fulfil the expectations of His people, nor of His nearest companions, because He transcended them. In truth He was not—He could not be—the Messiah as His countrymen conceived Him, a conquering hero who should reign over the restored Davidic kingdom. He was the Christ, yet could not let the world into His secret, because the world could not understand such Christhood, sacrificial and redemptive through self-giving. "*If Thou art the Christ, tell us. But He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe.*" He knew that He must die in order that the Kingdom might come, and all history shows that His self-offering has been the most potent instrument for bringing that Kingdom nearer. He knew that He must go away in order to come again, and it has proved even so : His going away was in dishonour, His coming again has been in glory.

So all the partial and partially-expressed longings of mankind—for a King whose dominion should be an everlasting dominion ; for a Son of man who should also be the Son of God ; for a Suffering Servant of the Lord, whose stripes should be for His brethren's healing ; a Divine Saviour, who by His voluntary death should redeem His followers from the bondage of sin—all these aspirations have been realized in Him, and in Him alone, whom we hail as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

"*Who say ye that I am ?*" is His challenge to every age ; and every age anew returns the answer, laden with an ever deeper significance as generation follows generation, "*Thou art the Christ of God.*"

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

NOTE A

Joseph's Paternity of Jesus (p. 24)

"Real" paternity, as understood by Matthew, may have meant no more than Joseph's public recognition of Jesus as his child, born in wedlock. So Prof. Burkitt in *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, ii., p. 260: "The points which Matthew wishes to impress on his readers are the *physical reality* of the birth of Christ from a virgin, and the *legality* of the descent from David. The physical reality of the descent from David was, as I understand him, a matter of no moment so long as the legal conditions are satisfied." *Cf.* Westcott (quoted *ib.*) on Matt. i. 16: "It is scarcely necessary to add that ἐγέννησεν in this genealogy expresses legal heirship and not physical descent."

NOTE B

The Meaning of "Rabbi" (p. 171)

"The disciples were respectful and called Him 'Sir.' The corresponding Semitic word is *Rabbi*, but it is useful to begin with its English equivalent. . . . The earliest rendering indeed of *Rabbi* as a form of address to Him is Διδάσκαλε, which does mean 'Teacher,' but I venture to think that neither this nor 'Rabbi' gives so good an equivalent as 'Sir,' for owing to its later use 'Rabbi' carries with it a suggestion of technical learning, not to say pedantry, that is quite foreign to the Gospel contexts" (Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, pp. 42–43).

NOTE C

"Hosanna" (p. 247)

"The best English equivalent for *Hosanna* . . . will be 'God save Israel!' used more or less as we are told they use 'God save Ireland!' over the water. I mean that *Hosanna* is a festal shout, but a festal shout in the form of a prayer to God to give a good turn to the affairs of the nation" (Burkitt, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. xvii., p. 145).

NOTE D

Luke's "Sympathy with Women" (p. 280)

It should be observed, however, that "the stories of Peter's wife's mother, of the Woman with an Issue, and of the Widow's Mites, are repeated in Luke from Mark, but no prominence is given to them; they are, in fact, somewhat curtailed. It seems therefore that the characteristic sympathy given to women, and the stress laid upon the women's part in the Ministry of Jesus, belong rather to one or more of Luke's sources than to Luke himself" (Burkitt, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, p. 113). The author is indebted to Prof. Burkitt for the information that in the Ferrar group of late Greek MSS. the story of the Woman taken in Adultery actually appears, not in the Fourth Gospel, but following Luke xxi. 38.

NOTE E

Was the Last Supper a Passover Meal? (p. 300)

Mr. Montefiore summarizes Chwolson's view as follows : " When the fourteenth of the month fell on Friday, it was not held to be legitimate to kill the lambs on that day, and they were killed and roasted on Thursday instead. The Paschal meal could be celebrated on the same evening, too, and most probably most Pharisees did celebrate it then, although the bread used at such an antedated meal was leavened and not unleavened bread. Thus Jesus was crucified before the seven days' Festival of Unleavened Bread began, and yet he celebrated on Thursday evening the Paschal meal with his disciples."

NOTE F

Christ before Herod (p. 326)

For a highly original view of this episode see Dr. A. W. Verrall's essay, " Christ before Herod," where it is argued that " there is simply no analogy at all " between the scene recorded by Luke and the mocking of Jesus by the Roman soldiers after sentence of death has been passed by Pilate : " Circumstances, actors, things said and done, the meaning of them—all are different ; and it is not even conceivable that the story of Luke should be an equivalent or compensation for the other." (See *The Bacchants of Euripides*, pp. 350-373.) According to Dr. Verrall, Herod was " well pleased to disoblige and snub the Sanhedrin," and before parting with Jesus " bestows on Him a royal gift and mark of favour " in the form of " a rich and valuable costume."

NOTE G

Where was Jesus first seen after the Crucifixion? (p. 359)

As against the view put forward in the text, it has been powerfully urged that the historical fact of Peter and his companions settling in Jerusalem instead of staying in Galilee favours the Lucan presentation, viz., that all visions or appearances of Jesus took place in or near the capital. But we do not know what communications may have passed between the disciples, who " fled " (Mark xiv. 50)—assuming that their flight took them back to Galilee—and the women who remained behind after the crucifixion. And the tradition embodied in Mark xiv. 28 and xvi. 7—(" He goeth before you into Galilee : *there* shall ye see Him ")—seems to point to an actual experience as its origin.

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